OAKWOOD SCHOOL

Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

Implementation Date: January 2016
Date / Term of last review: 7th September 2026

This policy applies to the whole school, including EYFS.

This policy is reviewed and updated annually (as a minimum) in line with department developments and government guidance or legislation.

This policy is available on the school's website and/or on request from the school office.

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Approval:	Clare Bradbury, Headteacher
Governor Approval:	Mrs Hannah Davies Governor with Safeguarding Responsibilities
Next Review Date:	September 2027 *(or before in line with regulations)*

For office use only:

Website	Required	✔
Internal Staff purposes only		

1. Aim and objectives

1.1. The aims of this policy are to:

- Support the child's development in ways that will foster security, confidence and independence.
- Provide an environment in which children and young people feel safe, secure, valued and respected, and feel confident, and know how to approach adults if they are in difficulties, believing they will be effectively listened to and early help given.
- Raise the awareness of all teaching and non-teaching staff and governors of the need to safeguard children and of their responsibilities in identifying and reporting possible cases of abuse *(Reference Appendices)*
- Provide a systematic means of monitoring children known or thought to be at risk of harm, and ensure we, the school, contribute to assessments of need and support packages for those children.
- Emphasise the need for good levels of communication between all members of staff.
- Develop a structured procedure within the school which will be followed by all members of the school community in cases of suspected abuse.
- Develop and promote effective working relationships with other agencies, especially the Police and Social Care.
- Ensure that **all** staff (including volunteers, staff of contractors, governors and supply staff and any individuals who are not school staff) working within our school who have substantial access to children have been checked as to their suitability complying with pre-appointment checks according to the requirements set out in KCSIE 2026, including verification of their identity, qualifications, and a satisfactory DBS check (according to guidance) and a central record is kept for audit.

2. Policy Guidance and Advice

2.1. We aim to be competent, knowledgeable, skilled, reflective and always improving as staff in promoting the welfare of children.

2.2. The Governing body takes seriously its responsibility under section 175 of the Education Act 2002 and shows due regard to KCSIE (2026) to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, working together with other agencies to ensure adequate arrangements within our school, creating a culture of safety, equality and protection to identify, assess, and support those children who are suffering harm.

2.3. This policy has regard to the following guidance and advice:

- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 ('KCSIE')
- Disqualification under the child care act (2006) (Sept 2018)
- What to do if you're worried a child is being abused: advice for practitioners (March 2015)
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026 ('WT')
- Information sharing: advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services (July 2018)
- Revised Prevent Duty Guidance for England and Wales (December 2023)
- The Prevent Duty: Departmental advice for schools and childminders (June 2015)
- The use of social media for online radicalisation (July 2015)
- Education Act 2002
- West Sussex Safeguarding Children Board WSSCB Child Protection Procedures
- Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment between Children in Schools and Colleges (2018)
- Searching, Screening and Confiscation in Schools (2018)
- Data protection laws
- Domestic Abuse Act 2021
- UK Council for Internet Safety (UKCIS)

2.4. We recognise that all adults, including temporary staff, volunteers, visitors and governors, have a full and active part to play in protecting our pupils from harm and promoting the welfare of pupils in our school. At all times the best interests of the child are considered and we will take action to enable all children to have the best outcomes. We promote a **culture of listening to children** and **a culture that supports issues about safeguarding and child welfare to be addressed**. The child's welfare is our paramount concern while protecting our children who may be vulnerable to radicalisation. It is our legal duty to comply with the stated documents in order to keep children safe. All staff should always speak to the DSL or DDSL should they feel concerned about the welfare of any pupil. However, it should be remembered that sometimes children will not feel ready or know how to tell someone that they are being abused, exploited, or neglected, and/or they may not recognise their experiences as harmful.

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is everyone's responsibility.

2.5. All staff believe that our school should provide **a caring, positive, safe and stimulating culture** that promotes the social, physical and moral development of the individual, always acting in the best interests of every individual child. We adhere to the Human Rights Act (1998) and the Equality Act (2018).

2.6. We create an environment where staff feel they are able to raise concerns and feel supported in their safeguarding role. Any member of staff is able to make a referral to external agencies. Advice and support will be given by the DSL and DDSL, alongside the DSSs as appropriate.

2.7. This policy also takes into account the procedures and practice of West Sussex as part of the inter-agency safeguarding procedures set up by the Local Safeguarding Partnerships (LSP).

3. Safe School, Safe Staff

3.1. We will ensure that all members of the governing body understand and fulfil their responsibilities, namely to ensure that:

- There is a Child Protection policy that sits together with a 'Staff Code of Conduct Policy'
- Staff will refer to 'Low Level Concerns' Policy
- The school operates safer recruitment procedures by ensuring that there is at least one person on every recruitment panel that has completed Safer Recruitment training;
- The school has procedures for dealing with allegations of abuse against staff, volunteers and the Headteacher to make a referral to the Teacher Regulation Agency and DBS;
- A senior leader has been appointed as the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) to take lead responsibility for safeguarding and child protection matters. The DSL is responsible for maintaining an overview of safeguarding within our school, to open channels of communication with local statutory agencies, support staff and carry out their safeguarding duties and to monitor the effectiveness of policies and procedures in practice and have appropriate status, authority, skills and experience within the school.
- On appointment, the DSL undertakes training (including interagency training) and LSP's approach to 'Prevent Duty' and receives update training every 2 years, in accordance with Annex B of KCSIE; the DSL completes advanced level safeguarding training.
- The DSL will undertake Prevent Awareness training available through WSCC and the LSP's. Training such as 'Channel', promoted in the non- statutory advice, provides advice and support for protecting children from radicalisation;
- DDSL and DSS complete advanced level safeguarding training alongside the DSL every two years.
- To provide continuity of safeguarding responsibilities, the DDSL will take over cover arrangements for periods when the designated safeguarding lead is unavailable due to

illness, leave, or other circumstances. This will ensure safeguarding concerns are received, monitored, and acted upon without delay.

- All other staff have Safeguarding training updated as appropriate in line with advice from the LSP's. Training on Prevent awareness, online safety and the reporting of child on child sexual violence / harassment is part of this;
- Any weaknesses in Safeguarding and Child Protection are remedied immediately;
- The Chair of Governors and Safeguarding Governor liaise with the LA in the event of an allegation of abuse made against the Headteacher;
- Safeguarding and Child Protection policies and procedures are reviewed at least annually and that the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy is available on the school website;
- The school and Governing Body consider how children may be taught about safeguarding. This is part of a broad and balanced curriculum covering relevant issues through personal social health education (PSHE) and through relationship, sex and health education (RSHE)
- Members of the Governing Body of the school take part in mandatory safeguarding training to ensure that they can assure themselves that the safeguarding policies and procedures in place in schools and colleges are effective.
- Enhanced DBS checks are in place for Chairs of Governors

3.2. The DSL is also involved in recruitment alongside the Business Manager and Headteacher, all of whom have completed Safer Recruitment Training. This will be repeated every 3-5 years.

3.3. All members of staff and volunteers are provided with safeguarding and child protection awareness information at induction, including in their induction pack, the school safeguarding policies so that they know who to discuss a concern with. The DSL, DDSL and DSS assist staff in understanding their roles and responsibilities as set out in Part One of the KCSIE guidance (2026) also ensuring all staff read this documentation. Any updates by the DfE are cascaded to all staff by the DSL immediately. The school takes effective steps to ensure this documentation is understood, not just read, by all staff.

3.4. All staff are required to notify the school immediately if there are any reasons why they should not be working with children. All members of staff are trained in and receive regular updates in e-safety and reporting concerns, examples of this are in weekly staff meetings.

3.5. All other staff and governors have safeguarding and child protection awareness training, updated by the DSL as appropriate, to maintain their understanding of the signs and indicators of abuse. The DSL is readily available to all staff to give them the opportunity to discuss any concerns they may have about welfare and safeguarding matters. The Head of EYFS (who is DSL trained) conducts EYFS Supervision meetings to enable EYFS staff to discuss concerns about welfare and safeguarding matters in the EYFS provision.

3.6. All members of staff, volunteers, and governors know how to respond to a pupil who discloses abuse through delivery of 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' (2026), and 'What to do if you suspect a Child is being Abused' (2015). In the event of absence of action following the report of a concern to the DSL/DSSs, staff will report directly to local children's services. **Anyone can make a referral.**

3.7. All parents/carers are made aware of the responsibilities of every staff member with regard to child protection procedures through publication of the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, and reference to it on our website and in parental welcome meetings.

3.8. Community users organising activities for children are aware of the school's safeguarding and child protection guidelines and procedures.

3.9. Out-of-school providers note in their safeguarding and child protection policy that whilst they are responsible for their own safeguarding and child protection policies and procedures, we, as a school, may refer any concerns we have about the provider to the local authority.

3.10. We will ensure that child protection type concerns or allegations against adults working in the school are referred to the LADO for advice, and that any member of staff found to have behaved in way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children will be notified to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) for consideration for barring, following resignation, dismissal, or when we cease to use their service as a result of a substantiated allegation, in the case of a volunteer.

3.11. In the case of a substantiated allegation against a member of staff, we will work with the LADO to determine whether there are any improvements to be made to the school's procedures or practices to help prevent similar events in the future.

3.12. Our procedures are regularly reviewed and updated at least annually, including an update and review of the effectiveness of procedures and their implementation. The Governing Body has oversight of such procedures and reviews at least termly. The DSL and Governor with Safeguarding responsibility meet termly. The DSL reports to the Education and Safeguarding Committee and full Board of Governors annually.

3.13. The name of the designated members of staff for Child Protection, the Designated Safeguarding Lead and deputies, will be clearly advertised in the school, with a statement explaining the school's role in referring and monitoring cases of suspected abuse.

3.14. All new members of staff will be given a copy of our safeguarding and child protection policies, which includes 'Children Missing in Education' and procedures and with the DSL, DDSL and DSS's names clearly displayed, as part of their induction into the school. They also receive a copy of Part One of KCSIE 2026 and the following policies:

- 'Staff Code of Conduct Policy' which also includes the whistleblowing procedure
- 'IT Acceptable Use Policy (within Appendix A of E-safety policy.)
- 'Mobile Device Policy'
- 'Behaviour Management Policy' (including Rewards and Sanctions)

3.15. Staff sign confirmation of compliance of these policies.

3.16. The policy is available publicly either on the school website or by other means in key areas of the school. Parents/carers are made aware of this policy and their entitlement to have a copy of it via the school website.

3.17. All staff must read Part 1 of Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2026 and should sign that they have read and understood it and will undertake formal Educare training. Copies are held in staff rooms for constant reference. Similarly, this applies to the Governing Body in relation to Part 2 of the same statutory guidance. All staff have read and signed to say that they have understood and comply with the adjoining policy 'Staff Code of Conduct Policy'.

3.18. Staff of any regular external contractors, who may have the opportunity for contact with pupils, will have basic safeguarding induction training, knowledge of who the DSL and DDSL are, and be aware of their duty to pass on concerns and adhere to appropriate behavioural boundaries. All visitors to the school will be asked to sign in electronically at the front desk and read the safeguarding overview of the school - including contact details of the DSL. Any non DBS checked visitors will wear an alternative coloured lanyard and will be accompanied and supervised at all times.

4. **Responsibilities**

4.1. The DSL and DDSL are responsible for the following key activities including online safety at Oakwood:

- Referring a child if there are concerns about possible abuse, to the Children's Services Area Referral, Assessment and Intervention Service (RAIS) Team, and acting as a focal point for staff to discuss concerns. Referrals should be made in writing, following a telephone call using the Integrated Front Door, formerly known as the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub.
- Ensuring secure and confidential records of concerns about a child are recorded on CPOMS, even if there is no need to make an immediate referral.
- Ensuring that all such records are kept confidentially and securely (on CPOMS) and are separate from pupil records, until the child's 25th birthday, and are forwarded on to the child's next school or college should and when they move on. A copy of the CP file will be retained by the school until such time that the new school acknowledges receipt of the original file. The DSL is proactive in sharing any CP information with new schools to ensure school support is in place for the children when they arrive in their new school ensuring any key staff have an awareness of their needs. All CP records are confidentially transferable through CPOMS to new schools and archived appropriately.
- Liaising with other agencies and professionals in line with 'Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026 '. This includes supporting an early help assessment. Any such cases will be kept under constant review and consideration given to a referral if the child's situation does not appear to be improving or is getting worse. ANY CHILD may benefit from early help if a child has a disability SEND, a young carer, missing from home, misusing drugs or alcohol or in a family circumstance presenting challenges eg. abuse, adult mental health etc.
- Ensuring that either they or the staff member attend case conferences, core groups, or other multi-agency planning meetings, contribute to assessments, and provide a report which has been shared with the parents including the 'Team around the Child' approach meetings and/or the 'Common Assessment Framework' (CAF).
- Being aware of pupils who have a social worker.
- Helping to promote educational outcomes by sharing the information about the welfare, safeguarding and child protection issues with teachers and school and college leadership staff.
- Ensuring that any pupil currently with a child protection plan who is absent in the educational setting without explanation for two days is referred to their key worker's Social Care Team.
- Organising child protection induction, and termly updating training for all school staff.
- Working with others to ensure that the school's filtering and monitoring systems are functional and effective

5. **Supporting Children**

5.1. We recognise that a child who is abused or is a witness to violence may feel helpless and humiliated, may blame themselves, and find it difficult to develop and maintain a sense of self- worth. When concerned about the welfare of a child, staff should always act in the **best** interests of the child, passing concerns onto the DSL not making their own judgements, enabling all children to have the best outcomes.

5.2. We recognise that the school may provide the only stability in the lives of children who have been abused or who are at risk of harm. We ensure children are taught about safeguarding as children "rarely tell" (KCSIE 2026).

5.3. We promote listening to children with positive relationships in school and support from independent counsellors or professionals as needed.

5.4. We teach children how they can keep themselves and others safe, including online. To be effective, we present this information in an age-appropriate way. We are sensitive to the specific needs and vulnerabilities of individual children, including children who are victims of abuse, and children with special educational needs or disabilities.

6. Definitions of safeguarding and types and signs of abuse

6.1. Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined as:providing help and support to meet the needs of children as soon as problems emerge, protecting children from maltreatment, whether that is within or outside the home, including online, preventing the impairment of children's mental and physical health or development, ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care, taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes. (KCSIE 2026)

6.2. Abuse is a form of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting by those known to them or, more rarely, by others (e.g. via the internet). Abuse can take place wholly online, or technology may be used to facilitate offline abuse. They may be abused by an adult or adults or another child or children. Abuse can be:

- physical abuse
- emotional abuse
- sexual abuse; and/or
- neglect.

6.3. Staff are referred to **Appendix 2** of this policy for further detail of the types of abuse and possible signs of abuse.

7. Our school will support all children by:

- Encouraging self-esteem and self-assertiveness, through the curriculum as well as our relationships, whilst not condoning aggression or bullying.
- Promoting a caring, safe and positive environment within the school.
- Liaising and working together with all other support services and those agencies involved in the safeguarding of children, drawing on their expertise, knowledge and experience including emotional and intellectual harm via social media and the use of the internet.
- Notifying Social Care as soon as there is a significant concern.
- Providing continuing support to a child about whom there have been concerns who leaves the school by ensuring that appropriate information is copied under confidential cover to the child's new setting and ensuring the school medical records are forwarded as a matter of priority.
- Paying special attention to the vulnerabilities of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. This includes any child who is also looked after by the local authority.

8. Procedures for Dealing with Concerns about a child

8.1. If staff suspect or hear an allegation or complaint of abuse or neglect from a child or any third party, they must act immediately and follow the relevant procedure below. Staff should not assume that somebody else will take action and share information that might be critical in keeping children safe.

8.2. The guidance, Information Sharing: Advice for Practitioners Providing safeguarding Services to Children, Young People, Parents and Carers supports staff who have to make decisions about sharing information. Fears regarding sharing information under the Data Protection Act 2018 and the GDPR should not be allowed to stand in the way of the need to promote the welfare, and protect the safety of children. If in doubt about what information can and should be shared, staff should speak to the DSL.

8.3. All staff should:

- listen carefully
- avoid asking leading questions
- reassure the individual that the allegation/complaint will be taken seriously
- not guarantee absolute confidentiality (as this may ultimately not be in the best interests of the child) and explain that the information needs to be passed to the appropriate person who will ensure that the correct action is taken
- share any concerns they have about a child with the Designated Safeguarding Lead. However, it should be remembered that sometimes children will not feel ready or know how to tell someone that they are being abused, exploited, or neglected, and/or they may not recognise their experiences as harmful. This should not prevent staff from having a professional curiosity by speaking to the DSL

8.4. All concerns, discussions and decisions (together with reasons) made under these procedures should be recorded in writing. The record should include the date, time and place of the conversation and detail of what was said and done by whom and in whose presence and signed by the person making it. Where the allegation relates to harmful sexual behaviours, if possible the disclosure should be managed with two members of staff present (preferably one of them being the DSL or DDSL).

8.5. Where there is a safeguarding concern, the School will ensure the pupil's wishes and feelings are considered when determining what action to take and what services to provide. This is particularly important in the context of harmful behaviours, such as sexual harassment and sexual violence. We manage this through our strong pastoral care system and open-door policy for all. We operate our processes with the best interests of the pupil at their heart.

9. Contextual Safeguarding

9.1. All staff, but especially the DSL and DDSL, should consider the context in which safeguarding incidents and behaviour occur and how they can be associated with factors outside the school. As a school we will, as part of the wider assessment of children, consider whether environmental factors are present in a child's life that are a threat to their safety and/or welfare. The school will share as much information with Children's Social Care as possible as part of the referral process to enable consideration of all the available evidence and the full context of any abuse. It is an approach that is vital to understanding and responding to young people's experiences of significant harm beyond their families.

10. Early Help for children

10.1. Any child may benefit from early help but all staff should be particularly alert to the potential need for early help for a child who:

- Is disabled and has specific additional needs
- Has special educational needs (whether or not they have a statutory education, health and care plan)
- Is a young carer
- Is showing signs of being drawn into antisocial or criminal behaviour, including gang involvement and association with organised crime groups
- Is frequently missing/goes missing from care or from home
- Is misusing drugs or alcohol themselves
- Is at risk of modern slavery, trafficking or exploitation
- Is in a family circumstance presenting challenges for the child, such as substance abuse, adult mental health problems or domestic abuse
- Has returned home to their family from care
- Is showing early signs of abuse and/or neglect
- Is at risk of being radicalised or exploited
- Is a privately fostered child
- Is pregnant and/or is a parent themselves
- Has exhibited early signs of abusive, violent and/or harmful behaviours
- Has been repeatedly removed from the classroom, experienced multiple suspensions, is on a part-time timetable, is at risk of being permanently excluded from schools, colleges and in Alternative Provision or a Pupil Referral Unit

10.2. Early help means providing support as soon as a problem emerges at any point in a child's life, from the foundation years through to the teenage years.

10.3. We recognise that any child may benefit from support before statutory intervention, including from universal services and community-based Early Help, or the targeted early help level of Family Help.

10.4. In the first instance, staff who consider that a pupil may benefit from early help should discuss this with the DSL. The DSL will consider the appropriate action to take in accordance with the West Sussex Safeguarding Children Board referral threshold document. The DSL will support staff in liaising with external agencies and professionals in an inter-agency assessment, as appropriate. If early help is appropriate, the matter will be kept under review and consideration given to a referral to children's social care if the pupil's situation does not appear to be improving.

11. What staff should do if they have concerns about a child

11.1. If staff (including governors, agency staff and volunteers) have any concerns about a child (as opposed to a child being in immediate danger), they should, where possible, speak with the DSL to agree a course of action although staff can make a direct referral to children's social care. As set out above, staff should not assume that somebody else will take action and share information that might be critical in keeping children safe. If anyone other than the DSL makes a referral, they should inform the DSL as soon as possible that a referral has been made. If a child's situation does not appear to be improving, the DSL should press children's social care for reconsideration. Staff should challenge any inaction and follow this up with the

DSL and children's social care as appropriate. All concerns, discussions and decisions made and the reasons for those decisions should be recorded in writing.

12. What staff should do if a child is in danger or at risk of harm

12.1. If staff (including governors, agency staff and volunteers) believe that a child is in immediate danger or at risk of harm, they should make an immediate referral to children's social care and/or the Police. **Anyone can make a referral.** Any such referral must be made immediately and in any event within **24 hours** (one working day) of staff being aware of the risk. Parental consent is not needed for referrals to statutory agencies such as the police and children's social care. If anyone other than the DSL makes a referral, they should inform the DSL as soon as possible that a referral has been made. The local authority social worker should acknowledge receipt to the referrer within 24 hours and make a decision about the next steps and type of response required. Staff should challenge any inaction and follow this up with the DSL and children's social care as appropriate. All concerns, discussions and decisions made and the reasons for those decisions should be recorded in writing.

12.2. The West Sussex Safeguarding Children Board's procedures can be found on their website: **Integrated Front Door@westsussex.gcsx.gov.uk** and/or wsscp@westsussex.gov.uk (*Please refer to **Appendix 5** for procedures*)

12.3. Hampshire County Council's procedures can be found on their website : Hampshire County Council (*Please refer to **Appendix 6** for procedures*)

13. Confidentiality

13.1. We recognise that all matters relating to child protection are confidential. The Headteacher or DSL, DDSL and DSSs will disclose any information about a child to other members of staff on a need to know basis only.

13.2. All staff must be aware that they have a professional responsibility to share information with other agencies in order to safeguard children.

13.3. All staff must be aware that they cannot promise a child to keep secrets which might compromise the child's safety or wellbeing.

13.4. We will always undertake to share our intention to refer a child to Social Care with their parents /carers unless to do so could put the child at greater risk of harm, or impede a criminal investigation. If in doubt, we will consult with the LADO on this point and liaise with Integrated Front Door.

14. Other Safeguarding Issues

14.1. Staff will be made aware that safeguarding issues can manifest themselves in many ways and can often overlap with one another. Some behaviours linked to drug taking, alcohol abuse, truanting, gender based violence and sexting also put children in danger.

14.2. Harm can also include ill treatment that is not physical as well as the impact of witnessing ill treatment of others. This can be particularly relevant, for example, in relation to the impact on children of all forms of domestic abuse.'

15. **Extra familial harms**

15.1. The school assesses the risks and issues in the wider community when considering the well-being and safety of its pupils.

15.2. All staff, but especially the designated safeguarding lead (and deputies) consider whether children are at risk of abuse or exploitation in situations outside their families. Extra familial harms take a variety of different forms and children can be vulnerable to multiple harms including (but not limited to) sexual abuse (including harassment and exploitation), domestic abuse in their own intimate relationships (teenage relationship abuse - including physical, sexual, emotional abuse, and stalking), criminal exploitation (including financial exploitation), serious youth violence, county lines and radicalisation.

16. Child on Child Abuse (including harassment and violence)

16.1. All staff are aware that child-on-child abuse is a safeguarding issue for both the victim and alleged perpetrator.

17. The School recognises that children are capable of abusing their peers and the different forms this can take: bullying (including cyber bullying), sexual violence and sexual harassment, (as set out in KCSIE Part 5), sexual assault, gender-based issues, physical abuse, sexting, sexual imagery, upskirting, on-line sexual harassment, initiation/hazing-type violence and rituals, serious physical assault and harm, or the threat of harm with a weapon.

17.1. The School's approach to sharing nudes and semi-nudes (previously known as sexting) and how this is approached by the School is by not allowing pupils mobile phones at school. We are aware some pupils may have access to phones and other mobile technology at home and out of school hours and therefore we follow guidance from the UK Council for Child Internet Safety (UKCIS): ''Sharing nudes and semi-nudes (UKCIS, December 2020) and 'Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges, DfE (2018).

17.2. The School also recognises that banter and other gender based issues can be prevalent in child on child abuse, for example, girls being sexually touched or boys being subjected to initiation/hazing type violence and will never be tolerated or simply seen as 'part of growing up'. Nor will harmful sexual behaviours be dismissed as the same or 'just having a laugh' or 'boys being boys'. It is recognised it is more likely that girls will be victims and boy's perpetrators, but all child on child abuse is unacceptable and will be taken seriously.

17.3. The school has zero tolerance for racism and derogatory behaviour or other forms of physical violence and conflict as well as sexism, misogyny/misandry, homophobia and biphobia.

17.4. We also recognise that children with special educational needs and disabilities can be more prone to child on child group isolation than other children and will consider extra pastoral support for those children.

17.5. **'Upskirting' is a criminal offence** to which staff comply with KCSIE 2026 ensuring they are familiar with the term and know the implications of this within the whole school community. They are aware that safeguarding issues can manifest themselves via child on child abuse.

17.6. The following steps will be taken to minimise the risk of child on child abuse. Where an issue of pupil behaviour or bullying gives 'reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm', staff should follow the procedures below rather than the Anti-Bullying and Behaviour policies:

- A pupil against whom an allegation of abuse has been made may be suspended from the School during the investigation.
- The School will take advice from the LSP on the investigation of such allegations and will take all appropriate action to ensure the safety and welfare of all pupils involved including the alleged victim and perpetrator.
- If it is necessary for a pupil to be interviewed by the Police in relation to allegations of abuse, the School will ensure that, subject to the advice of the LSP, parents are informed as soon as possible and that the pupils involved are supported during the interview by an appropriate adult and until the investigation is completed.
- Confidentiality will be an important consideration for the School and advice will be sought as necessary from the LSP and/or the Police as appropriate.
- Police may be informed of any harmful sexual behaviours which are potentially criminal in nature, such as grabbing bottoms, breasts and genitalia.
- Rape, assault by penetration, sexual assaults and causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent will be passed to the police. If the DSL decides to make a referral to children's social care and/or a report to the police against a victim's wishes, the reasons should be explained to the pupil and appropriate specialist support offered.

17.7. In the event of disclosures about child on child abuse, all children involved (both victim and perpetrator) will be treated as being at risk, and safeguarding procedures in accordance with this policy will be followed. Victims will be supported by staff as appropriate and support from external agencies will be sought, as appropriate.

- The victim may ask the school or college not to tell anyone about the sexual violence or sexual harassment. We understand there are no easy or definitive answers when a victim makes this request. If the victim does not give consent to share information, staff may still lawfully share it, if there is another legal basis under the UK GDPR that applies. Advice will be sought from the designated safeguarding lead (or deputy).
- Where an allegation of sexual violence or sexual harassment is progressing through the criminal justice system, we will be aware of anonymity and do all we can to protect the anonymity of any children involved in any report of sexual violence or sexual harassment. We will also consider the potential impact of social media in facilitating the spreading of rumours and exposing victims' identities.

17.8. When there has been a report of sexual violence (in school, outside of school or online), the DSL will make an immediate risk and needs assessment. Where there has been a report of sexual harassment, the need for a risk assessment is considered on a case-by-case basis. The risk and needs assessment should consider:

- the victim;
- the alleged perpetrator; and
- all the other children, (and, if appropriate, adult students and staff) at the school or college, especially any actions that are appropriate to protect them from the alleged perpetrator(s), or from future harms, and
- the time and location of the incident, and any action required to make the location safer

17.9. Risk assessments, allegations and disclosures of child on child abuse will be recorded by the DSL and held confidentially in the Safeguarding files and kept under review. In relation to a report of sexual violence or sexual harassment, the DSL will reassure any victim that they are being taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe. The victim will never be given the impression that they are creating a problem by reporting sexual violence or sexual harassment; nor would a victim ever be made to feel ashamed for making a report. The DSL

will consider the risks posed to pupils and put adequate measures in place to protect them and keep them safe. This may include consideration of the proximity of the victim and alleged perpetrator and considerations regarding shared classes, sharing school premises and school transport. If it is deemed reasonable to suspect that a child is suffering, or likely to suffer significant harm, the DSL/Head Teacher will refer to local agencies.

17.10. The DSL will regularly review and look out for patterns of concerning, problematic or inappropriate behaviour. Where a pattern is identified, the DSL will consider whether there are wider cultural issues within the school that are enabling inappropriate behaviours to occur. The appropriate actions will be taken to minimise the risk.

17.11. The school recognises that timely, evidence-based support can be key to preventing children from going on to commit abuse or violence.

18. Physical Intervention

18.1. We acknowledge that there are circumstances when it is appropriate for staff in school to use reasonable force. Staff must only ever use physical intervention as a last resort, when a child is endangering him/herself or others, and that at all times it must be the minimal force necessary to prevent injury to another person. Further details are in 'Use of Reasonable Force' Policy. Such events should be recorded and signed by a witness. Staff who are likely to need to use physical intervention will be appropriately trained.

18.2. We understand that physical intervention of a nature which causes injury or distress to a child may be considered under child protection or disciplinary procedures. We recognise that touch is appropriate in the context of working with children, and all staff have been given 'Safe Practice' guidance to ensure they are clear about their professional boundary in their staff induction training and with regular safeguarding updates in staff meetings and INSET training events.

19. Anti-Bullying

19.1. Our school policy on anti-bullying is set out in a separate document and acknowledges that to allow or condone bullying may lead to consideration under child protection procedures. This includes all forms. cyber, racist, homophobic and gender related bullying. We keep a record of known bullying incidents. All staff are aware that children with SEND and / or differences/perceived differences are more susceptible to being bullied / victims of child abuse (this includes online abuse and cyber-bullying). We keep a record of bullying incidents.

20. Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)

20.1. Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) is a form of child sexual abuse where children are sexually exploited for money, power or status. It can involve violent, humiliating and degrading sexual assaults. It occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity. In some cases, young people are persuaded or forced into exchanging sexual activity for money, drugs, gifts, affection or status. Consent cannot be given, even where a child may believe they are voluntarily engaging in sexual activity with the person who is exploiting them. Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact and can happen online. The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual. This can be committed by an individual or an organised network and most sexual abuse is

committed by those previously known to the victim. This remains a significant concern, as professionals continue to encounter cases where children are manipulated, groomed, and exploited without fully understanding the abuse they are experiencing. A significant number of children who are victims of sexual exploitation go missing from home, care and education at some point. Some of the following signs may be indicators of sexual exploitation:

- Children who appear with unexplained gifts or new possessions;
- Children who associate with other young people involved in exploitation;
- Children who have older boyfriends or girlfriends;
- Children who suffer from sexually transmitted infections or become pregnant;
- Children who suffer from changes in emotional well-being;
- Children who misuse drugs and alcohol;
- Children who go missing for periods of time or regularly come home late; and
- Children who regularly miss school or education or do not take part in education.

21. Serious Violence

21.1. Serious violence is a continuing safeguarding concern. It may involve physical assault, carrying, threatening with, or using weapons, often in the context of peer conflict or bullying, and it can also be associated with criminal exploitation.

21.2. We recognise that the impact of serious violent crime on individuals and the community is significant. The Serious Violence Strategy, which was introduced by the government in 2018, identifies offences such as homicides, and knife and gun crime as key factors which account for around one percent of all recorded crime. Tackling serious violence is not a law enforcement issue alone; it requires a multiple-strand approach involving a range of partners across different sectors.

21.3. The main areas that the Serious Violence Strategy focuses on are:
- tacking county lines
- early intervention and prevention
- supporting communities and local partnerships
- effective law enforcement and the criminal justice response.

21.4. All staff should be aware of indicators, which may signal that children are at risk from, or are involved with serious violent crime. These may include increased absence from school, a change in friendships or relationships with older individuals or groups, a significant decline in performance, signs of self-harm or a significant change in wellbeing, or signs of assault or unexplained injuries. Unexplained gifts or new possessions could also indicate that children have been approached by, or are involved with, individuals associated with criminal networks or gangs.

21.5. Staff should report any concerns about a child carrying or using a weapon (or expressing intent to do so) to the designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy). The DSL should then assess risk and, where relevant, put in place a safety and support plan.

21.6. All staff are aware that children might be at highest risk around the school day (for example immediately after school)

21.7. All staff should be aware of the associated risks and understand the measures in place to manage these. Early intervention is about recognising and responding to the indicators of potential vulnerability, providing early support that is effective. When a young person begins

to show the signs of exploitation or vulnerability to exploitation and therefore increased risk from Serious Violence, we should be able to intervene as early as possible to help reduce the risk factors and increase the protective factors.

21.8. Youth Endowment Fund (YEF) will be contacted for evidence-based early support where necessary.

21.9. Where information indicates a risk to others and/or the individual pupil, for example where a pupil has previously carried, threatened with, or used a knife or weapon, it is incumbent on the receiving school to assess risk, and accordingly, put in place a safety and support plan for when the child arrives.

22. Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)

22.1. CCE is where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, control, manipulate or deceive a child into any criminal activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or (b) for the financial or other advantage of the perpetrator of facilitator and/or (c) through violence or the threat fo violence. This can be committed or facilitated by an organised network or gang, and the victim may identify as being part of this group. This may constitute modern slavery, a relevant child protection and modern slavery referral should be completed where a potential victim of CCE or CSE is identified.

22.2. Children who are criminally exploited should have their vulnerabilities recognised by adults and professionals and should be treated as victims. It is not possible for a child to consent to be exploited, abused or trafficked.

22.3. The victim may have been criminally exploited even if the activity appears consensual. CCE does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology.

22.4. Staff are trained to look for the indicators of CCE as stated in CSE.

23. County Lines

23.1. County lines is a term used to describe gangs and organised criminal networks involved in exporting illegal drugs using dedicated mobile phone lines or other form of a "deal line".

23.2. Exploitation is an integral part of the county lines offending model with children and vulnerable adults exploited to move [and store] drugs and money. Offenders will often use coercion, intimidation, violence (including sexual violence to ensure compliance of victims.

23.3. Staff are aware that children can easily become trapped by this type of exploitation and are made aware of the signs of exploitation.

24. Honour Based Violence (HBV)

24.1. Honour Based Violence (HBV) encompasses crimes which have been committed to protect or defend the honour of the family and/or the community, including **Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)**, **forced marriage**, and practices such as breast ironing.

24.2. FGM comprises all procedures involving partial or total removal of the external female genitalia or other injury to the female genital organs. Guidance on the warning signs that FGM may be about to take place, or may have already taken place, can also be found on pages 38-41 of the Multi-agency statutory guidance on FGM: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/multi-agency-statutory-guidance-on-female-genital-mutilation and pages 13-14 of the Multi-agency guidelines - Handling case of forced marriage: https://www.gov.uk/guidance/forced-marriage.

24.3. Abuse committed in the context of presenting "honour" often involves a wider network of family or community pressure and can include multiple perpetrators and the additional risk factors this entails.

24.4. To give an example of indications that a girl has already been subjected to FGM:

- A pupil may have difficulty walking, sitting or standing and may even look uncomfortable.
- A pupil may have frequent urinary, menstrual or stomach problems or spend longer than normal in the bathroom due to difficulties urinating.
- There may be prolonged or repeated absences from school and/or noticeable behaviour changes (e.g. withdrawal or depression) on the pupil's return.
- A pupil is reluctant to undergo a medical examination.

24.5. If staff have a concern that a pupil may be at risk of FGM, they should activate local safeguarding procedures, using existing national and local protocols for multi-agency liaison with Police and Children's Social Care. If in any doubt, staff should speak to the DSL.

24.6. There is a statutory duty on teachers to personally report to the Police where they discover (either through disclosure by the victim or visual evidence) that FGM appears to have been carried out on a girl under 18. Unless the teacher has a good reason not to, they should still consider and discuss any such case with the DSL and involve children's social care as appropriate. If the teacher is unsure whether this reporting duty applies, they should discuss their concerns with the DSL in accordance with this policy. Where a teacher suspects that a pupil is at risk (i.e. where the teacher does not discover that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out, either through disclosure by the victim or visual evidence) teachers should follow the School's local safeguarding procedures.

24.7. For additional guidance, please refer to ***Appendix 3***.

25. Forced Marriage

25.1. Forcing a person into a marriage is a crime in England and Wales. A forced marriage is one entered into without the full and free consent of one or both parties and where violence, threats or any other form of coercion is used to cause a person to enter into a marriage. Threats can be physical or emotional and psychological. A lack of full and free consent can be where a person does not consent or where they cannot consent (if they have learning disabilities, for example). Nevertheless, some communities use religion and culture as a way to coerce a person into marriage. Schools and colleges can play an important role in safeguarding children from forced marriage. There are a range of potential indicators that a child may be at risk of forced marriage, details of which can be found on pages 13-14 of the Multi-agency guidelines: Handling cases of forced marriage. School staff can also contact the Forced Marriage Unit if they need advice or information: Contact: 020 7008 0151 or email fmu@fco.gov.uk.

26. What is the difference between a forced marriage and an arranged marriage?

26.1. In a forced marriage, one or both spouses do not consent to the marriage, but are coerced into it. Duress can include physical, psychological, financial, sexual and emotional pressure. In the cases of some vulnerable adults who lack the capacity to consent, coercion is not required for a marriage to be forced. Honour-based abuse can be a trigger for a forced marriage.

In an arranged marriage, the families of both prospective spouses take a leading role in arranging the marriage but the choice of whether or not to accept the arrangements still remains with the couple.

27. Radicalisation

27.1. Radicalisation refers to the process by which a person comes to support terrorism and forms of extremism. Extremism is vocal or active opposition to fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs. It can also call for the death of members of the armed forces, whether in this country or overseas. We follow 'The Prevent Duty' 2015 advice and guidance.

27.2. There is no single way of identifying an individual who is likely to be susceptible to an extremist ideology. It can happen in many different ways and settings. Specific background factors may contribute to vulnerability which are often combined with specific influences such as family, friends or online, and with specific needs for which an extremist or terrorist group may appear to provide an answer. The internet and the use of social media in particular have become major factors in the radicalisation of young people. As with other safeguarding risks, staff should be alert to changes in children's behaviour, which could indicate that they may be in need of help or protection. Staff should use their judgement in identifying children who might be at risk of radicalisation and act proportionately, which may include the DSL making a Prevent referral which will be first assessed by the police and may be passed to a multi-agency Channel panel.

27.3. Oakwood School values freedom of speech and the expression of beliefs / ideology as fundamental rights underpinning our society's values. Both pupils/students and teachers have the right to speak freely and voice their opinions. However, freedom comes with responsibility and free speech that is designed to manipulate the vulnerable or that leads to violence and harm of others goes against the moral principles in which freedom of speech is valued. Free speech is not an unqualified privilege; it is subject to laws and policies governing equality, human rights, community safety and community cohesion.

27.4. Definitions of radicalisation and extremism, and indicators of vulnerability to radicalisation are in ***Appendix 4*** and we would refer to 'counter-extremism@education.gsi.gov.uk (tel: 0207 340 0764) as and when required.

28. Children with a social worker

28.1. Oakwood School recognises that when a child has a social worker, it is an indicator that the child is more at risk than most pupils. This may mean that they may be more vulnerable to further harm, as well as facing educational barriers to attendance, learning, behaviour and poor mental health.

28.2. We take these needs into account when making plans to support pupils who have a social worker through regular communication between the DSL, teachers and support services.

33. Young Carers

- All staff are alert to the needs of young carers, recognising that caring responsibilities can impact on their attendance, attainment, behaviour and wellbeing.
- We recognise that early identification is essential to ensure young carers receive support at the right time and by the appropriate services including additional support from external partners, or local authority and health services.
- Where a young carer is identified, the DSL will contact social services for support through the young carer's service.

34. Safeguarding children with medical conditions

- Staff are aware that the fact that there has been an incident relating to the management of a child or young person's medical condition (including allergies) would not in and of itself warrant a referral to local safeguarding partners.

- A safeguarding referral would only be needed where an incident highlighted concern that the child or young person might be at an increased risk of being neglected, abused or exploited by persons inside or outside of their family unit because of their medical condition. This might occur where relevant information about a child or young person's medical condition is not provided to a school, or where they are repeatedly sent without essential medication, thereby putting the individual at risk.

29. Special Educational Needs /Disabilities /Certain health conditions

29.1. Pupils with SEND, disabilities or certain health conditions may not outwardly show signs of abuse and/or may have difficulties in communication about abuse or neglect. These can include:

- assumptions that indicators of possible abuse such as behaviour, mood and injury relate to the child's disability without further exploration;
- the potential for children with SEN and disabilities or health conditions being disproportionately impacted by behaviours such as bullying, without outwardly showing any signs;
- communication barriers and difficulties in managing or reporting these challenges as they may not understand that what is happening to them is abuse
- the need for intimate care or that these children are isolated from others
- that these children are more likely to be dependent on adults for care

29.2. Staff will support such pupils in expressing any concerns they may have and will be particularly vigilant to any signs or indicators of abuse, discussing this with the DSL as appropriate.

30. Lesbian, Gay, Bi or Gender Questioning (LGBGQ)

30.1. Staff recognise that a child or a young person may be LBTGQ is not in itself an inherent risk factor for harm. However, children who are LBTGQ can be targeted by other children. In some

cases, a child who is perceived by other children to be LBTGQ (whether or not) can be just as vulnerable as children who identify as LBTGQ.

30.2. Risks can be compounded where children who are LBTGQ lack a trusted adult with whom they can be open. We endeavour to reduce the additional barriers faced by providing a safe space for them to speak to appropriate members of staff when needed.

31. Children who are questioning their gender

31.1. When supporting a gender questioning child, the School will not initiate any action. The School will take time to understand the thoughts and feelings of children who are questioning their gender and be appropriately professionally curious about the full range of the child's experiences.

31.2. Staff should remain aware of the potential vulnerabilities of children who are questioning their gender, including the possibility of complex mental health and psychosocial needs for example relating to relationships with family, peers or their broader social environment, including discriminatory bullying. In making decisions about supporting social transitions, staff will comply with their distinct but interacting obligations under safeguarding legislation and equality and human rights law. The DSL will be involved in all cases where a child is questioning their gender. Staff will not adopt any changes relating to social transition unless a decision has been made by a school or college and a child's parents or carers have been involved. Parents will be involved in the vast majority of cases. In the rare circumstances where involving parents or carers would constitute a greater risk to the child than not involving them, the DSL will determine what action is needed to safeguard the child, before the parents or carers are contacted or any decisions are taken.

31.3. The School complies with its obligations under the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 regarding the provision of toilets and washing facilities. The School does not permit children to use toilets designated for the opposite biological sex. The School has regard to the provisions set out in Part two of KCSIE regarding single-sex spaces and changing rooms.

32. Domestic Abuse

32.1. In April 2021, the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 received Royal Assent and introduced a statutory definition for the first time. The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 (Part 1) defines domestic abuse as any of the following behaviours, either as a pattern of behaviour, or as a single incident, between two people over the age of 16, who are 'personally connected' to each other:
(a) physical or sexual abuse;
(b) violent or threatening behaviour;
(c) controlling or coercive behaviour;
(d) economic abuse (adverse effect of the victim to acquire, use or maintain money or other property; or obtain goods or services); and
(e) psychological, emotional or other abuse.

32.2. People are 'personally connected' when they are, or have been married to each other or civil partners; or have agreed to marry or become civil partners. If the two people have been in an intimate relationship with each other, have shared parental responsibility for the same child, or they are relatives. The definition of Domestic Abuse applies to children if they see or hear, or experience the effects of, the abuse; and they are related to the abusive person. (The definition can be found here: https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2021/17/part/1/enacted)

32.3. Types of domestic abuse include intimate partner violence, abuse by family members, teenage relationship abuse and child/adolescent to parent violence and abuse. Anyone can be a victim of domestic abuse, regardless of sexual identity, age, ethnicity, socio-economic status, sexuality or background and domestic abuse can take place inside or outside of the home.

32.4. The School should be mindful that children can often blame themselves for the abuse or may have had to leave the family home as a result of the abuse. Domestic Abuse may lead to other safeguarding concerns, and should therefore be managed under this policy.

33. Homelessness

33.1. Being homeless, or at risk of homelessness presents a real risk to a child's welfare. The School should be aware of potential indicators of homelessness including: household debt, rent arrears, domestic abuse and anti-social behaviour, as well as a family being asked to leave a property. If staff are made aware, or suspect that a pupil may be at risk of homelessness they should talk to the DSL in the first instance. Whilst referrals to the Local Housing Authority should be progressed as appropriate, and in accordance with local procedures, this does not and should not replace a referral to the LADO where a child has been harmed or is at risk of harm, in accordance with this policy.

34. Children who go missing from school

34.1. The DfE publication *Children Missing Education* (2016) describes the legal requirements in relation to registers. A child going missing from school is a potential indicator of abuse or neglect and may also raise concerns about other safeguarding issues, including the criminal exploitation of children.

34.2. Staff must follow the School's procedures for dealing with children who go missing, particularly on repeat occasions. The School's procedure for dealing with children who go missing can be found within this policy. All unexplained absences will be followed up in accordance with this policy and the Attendance and Admissions Policies. The School shall inform the local authority of any pupil who is going to be added to or deleted from the School's admission register at non-standard transition points in accordance with the requirements of the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006. This will assist the local authority to:

a) fulfil its duty to identify children of compulsory school age who are missing from education; and
b) follow up with any child who might be in danger of not receiving an education and who might be at risk of abuse, neglect or radicalisation.

34.3. School attendance registers are carefully monitored to identify any trends. The School will inform the local authority, and the local authority where the child is normally resident, of any pupil who fails to attend school regularly, or has been absent without the School's permission for a continuous period of 10 school days or more, at such intervals as are agreed between the School and the local authority. These intervals are in agreement with the Headteacher. Action should be taken in accordance with this policy if any absence of a pupil from the School gives rise to a concern about their welfare.

34.4. We update our admissions register when a parent notifies us that a pupil will live at another address, in addition or instead, the new address, the full name of the parent with whom the pupil will normally live in future and the date from which it is expected the pupil will normally live there, where it is reasonably practicable for the school to ascertain on a regular basis. In line with KCSIE (2023) we will hold more than 1 emergency contact number of each pupil, where reasonably possible.

34.5. We will also update the admissions register to contain the name of the destination school (or additional school, in the case of dual registration) when notified by a parent and the first date of attendance, where it is reasonably practicable for the school to ascertain this information.

34.6. Deletions from the admissions register are also regulated by the Admissions Manager. In summary, this will be when:

- the child has been taken out of school to be home educated;
- when the family has apparently moved away;
- when the child has been certified as medically unfit to attend;
- when the child is in custody for more than four months;
- when the child has been permanently excluded.

35. Children and the court system

35.1. Children are sometimes required to give evidence in criminal courts, either for crimes committed against them or for crimes they have witnessed. There are two age appropriate guides to support children 5-11-year olds and 12-17 year olds available on the gov.uk website. The guides explain each step of the process and support and special measures that are available. There are diagrams illustrating the courtroom structure and the use of video links is explained.

35.2. Making child arrangements via the family courts following separation can be stressful and entrench conflict in families. This can be stressful for children. The Ministry of Justice has launched an online child arrangements information tool with clear and concise information on the dispute resolution service. We may refer some parents and carers to this service where appropriate (E.G. CHAMS).

36. Children with family members in prison

36.1. Approximately 200,000 children have a parent sent to prison each year. These children are at risk of poor outcomes including poverty, stigma, isolation and poor mental health. NICCO provides information designed to support professionals working with offenders and their children, to help mitigate negative consequences for those children.

37. Looked After Children

37.1. A previously looked after child potentially remains vulnerable and so as a school, we ensure staff have the skills, knowledge and understanding necessary to keep safe the children who are looked after by our local authorities as/and if we have such children on role. In this instance, a designated member of staff, (ie SENDCo), alongside the DSL, would have responsibility for their welfare and progress and have up to date assessment information from the relevant local authorities, the most recent care plan and contact arrangements ensuring all agencies are working together and prompt action is taken on concerns to safeguard these children who are a particularly vulnerable group. The school has an

awareness of the statutory guidance for local authorities promoting the education of looked-after children.

38. Teaching children how to stay safe online

38.1. The School will ensure that children are taught about safeguarding and keeping safe online at school as well as keeping safe when they are accessing 'online learning' whilst out-of-school. Children are made aware of on-line risks according to the '4Cs':

- **Content:** being exposed to illegal, inappropriate, or harmful content, for example: pornography, racism, misogyny, self-harm, suicide, antisemitism, radicalisation, extremism, misinformation, disinformation (including fake news) and conspiracy theories.

- **Contact**: being subjected to harmful online interaction with other users; for example: peer to peer pressure, commercial advertising and adults posing as children or young adults with the intention to groom or exploit them for sexual, criminal, financial or other purposes.

- **Conduct**: online behaviour that increases the likelihood of, or causes, harm; for example, making, sending and receiving explicit images (e.g. consensual and non-consensual sharing of nudes and semi-nudes and/or pornography, sharing other explicit images and online bullying, and

- **Commerce:** risks such as online gambling, inappropriate advertising, phishing and or financial scams.

38.2. We are sensitive to the specific needs and vulnerabilities of individual children, including children who are victims of abuse, and children with special educational needs or disabilities.

38.3. We understand that many children have unlimited and unrestricted access to the internet via mobile phone networks (i.e. 3G, 4G and 5G). This access means some children, whilst at school or college, sexually harass their peers via their mobile and smart technology, share indecent images: consensually and non-consensually (often via large chat groups), and view and share pornography and other harmful content.

38.4. As a school, we manage this risk by ensuring that;

- appropriate filters and monitoring systems are in place to keep children safe online which are regularly reviewed for their effectiveness. Reviews are carried out by the SLT member responsible for filtering and monitoring, with the support of the school's designated safeguarding lead and IT support. They include checks that filtering is working appropriately on all internet-connected devices in all relevant locations, and a record is kept of these checks.
- The School's system is Smoothwall, which aims to reduce the risk of children being exposed to illegal, inappropriate and harmful materials online; reduce the risk of children being subjected to harmful online interaction with others; and help manage online behaviour that can increase a child's likelihood of, or causes, harm
- any school profiles (google log-ins on personal devices) used away from the school site are also subject to filtering and monitoring procedures.
- We ensure that the systems we have in place to report any difficulties with the system are understood by all staff and reports are effectively managed.
- all our staff undertake training to understand the risks of poor filtering and monitoring, and know how to share their concerns
- all our staff have taken part in annual cybersecurity training

- staff are equipped with the knowledge to safeguard children online by attending online safety training and complying with "Teaching Online Safety in Schools" (2019) and ''Guidance for Safer Working Practices'', (updated in 2022)
- School currently subscribes to ''Online Safety UK'', which regularly updates staff, governors, children and parents about online safety
- Children understand the risks posed by adults or young people, who use the internet and social media to bully, groom, abuse or radicalise other people, especially children, young people and vulnerable adults.
- Internet safety is integral to the school's ICT curriculum and is also embedded in PSHE and sex and relationships education (RSE) as age appropriate.

38.5. We follow the latest resources promoted by DfE and refer to the school's E-Safety Policy:
- The use of social media for online radicalisation
- The UK Safer Internet Centre
- CEOP's Thinkuknow website (www.thinkuknow.co.uk)

39. Use of AI

39.1. The School recognises that artificial intelligence, including generative AI, presents both significant opportunities and safeguarding risks in education. The School is committed to ensuring that the use of AI is safe, ethical, transparent and aligned with the School's safeguarding obligations. The School's approach to AI safeguarding is embedded within the existing provisions of this policy, including in relation to filtering and monitoring, online safety, training and responding to specific safeguarding issues.

39.2. The School will only use AI products that meet the DfE's Generative AI: product safety expectations and any use of generative AI by staff or pupils will be carefully considered and assessed, evaluating the benefits and risks within the School's context.

39.3. The School is alert to the safeguarding risks arising from AI, including but not limited to:
- the generation of deepfake images and AI-generated intimate imagery;
- the potential for AI chatbots to produce harmful, inaccurate, or age-inappropriate content;
- the risk of 'cognitive offloading' where pupils defer their critical thinking to AI tools; and
- the use of AI to facilitate grooming, exploitation, or the creation of child sexual abuse material.

39.4. The School will only use AI products that meet the DfE's Generative AI: product safety expectations and any use of generative AI by staff or pupils will be carefully considered and assessed, evaluating the benefits and risks within the School's context.

39.5. Any safeguarding or wellbeing concern arising from the use of AI tools should be reported to the DSL immediately, using the procedures set out in this policy.

39.6. This includes, but is not limited to, concerns about:
- a pupil creating, sharing, or being the subject of AI-generated intimate imagery (deepfakes)
- a pupil being exposed to harmful, inaccurate, or age-inappropriate content through an AI tool

- a pupil's personal data being compromised through the use of an AI tool
- a pupil interacting with an AI chatbot in a way that causes concern for their welfare or mental health
- a member of staff using AI in a way that may compromise pupil safety or data security.

39.7. The DSL will investigate any AI-related safeguarding concern and determine whether it should be referred to external agencies such as children's social care and/or the police, in accordance with the procedures set out in this policy.

39.8. The School's Acceptable Use of IT Policy sets out further detail on the School's approach to AI, including approved tools, acceptable use guidelines, academic integrity expectations and data protection arrangements. Staff should refer to that policy alongside the safeguarding procedures set out in this policy.

40. Visiting Speakers

40.1. The Prevent statutory guidance requires schools to have clear protocols for ensuring that any visiting speakers are appropriately supervised and suitable. The School's responsibility to our pupils is to ensure that they can critically assess the information that they receive as to its value to themselves, and that the information is aligned to the ethos and values of the School and British values.

40.2. The School undertakes a risk assessment before agreeing to a Visiting Speaker being allowed to attend. This will take into account any vetting requirements considered appropriate in the circumstances, and may include a DBS check if relevant.

40.3. Visiting speakers will be expected to understand that where appropriate their session should actively promote the British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs and at no point undermine these. In some cases, the School may request a copy of the Visiting Speaker's presentation and/or footage in advance of the session being provided.

40.4. Visiting speakers, as with all volunteers, whilst on the school site, will be supervised by a School employee. On attending the School, Visiting Speakers will be required to show original current identification documentation including a photograph such as a passport or photo card driving licence. The School shall also keep a formal register of visiting speakers retained in line with its Data Protection Policy. To ensure an open and transparent procedure for the School and the Visiting Speaker, we follow the schools Visiting Speaker Policy.

41. Mental Health

41.1. All staff at Oakwood are aware that mental health problems can, in some cases, be an indicator that a child has suffered or is at risk of suffering abuse, neglect or exploitation. School staff are not expected or trained to diagnose mental health conditions or issues, but may notice behaviours that may be of concern. This could include self-harm, signs of an eating disorder, suicidal ideation or suicide. If staff have a mental health concern about a child that is also a safeguarding concern, immediate action should be taken by speaking to the DSL.

41.2. Staff promote good mental wellbeing and prevent the onset of mental illness through:

- observing pupils and identifying early those who may be experiencing mental health problems or at risk of developing one
- ensuring early targeted support is provided
- liaising with/referral to specialist services where needed.

41.3. To support positive well being and mental health, where there is a concern, pupils are offered support by trained staff to include ELSA, music therapy, art therapy and lego therapy.

42. Supporting Staff

42.1. We recognise that staff working in the school who have become involved with a child who has suffered harm, or appears to be likely to suffer harm may find the situation stressful and upsetting. We will support such staff by providing an opportunity to talk through their anxieties with the DSL, DDSL and DSSs and to seek further support as appropriate.

43. Arrangements for dealing with allegations of abuse against teachers and other staff (including the Headteacher, Governors and Volunteers)

43.1. The School's procedures for managing allegations against staff who are currently working in the School follows Department for Education statutory guidance and the Local Safeguarding Partnership arrangements and applies when staff (including volunteers) have (or are alleged to have):

- Behaved in a way that has harmed a pupil, or may have harmed a pupil
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a pupil or
- Behaved towards a pupil in a way that indicated that they may pose a risk of harm if they were to work regularly or closely with children.

43.2. Allegations against a teacher who is no longer teaching should be referred to the Police. Historical (non-recent) allegations of abuse should be referred to the Police and also the LADO.

43.3. If an allegation is made against anyone working with children in the School, the School should not undertake their own investigation of allegations without prior consultation with the Local Authority 'designated officer' or, in the most serious cases, the Police, so as not to jeopardise statutory investigations. In borderline cases, the School may discuss informally with the 'designated officer' on a no-names basis.

43.4. All allegations should be investigated as a priority to avoid any delay following the process:

1. All allegations which appear to meet the above reporting criteria are to be reported straight away to the 'case manager' who is the DSL. If an allegation is reported to the DSL, the DSL will keep the Head informed. Where the Head or DSL is absent or is the subject of the allegation or concern, reports should be made to the Chair of Governors. Where the Head or DSL is the subject of the allegation or concern, the Head or DSL must not be informed of the allegation prior to contact with the Chair of Governors and designated officers.

2. The case manager/DSL should immediately discuss the allegation with the Headteacher and/or DDSL and consider the nature, content and context of the allegation and agree a course of action including any involvement of the Police. (Where the case manager deems there to be an immediate risk to children or there is evidence of a possible

criminal offence, the case manager may involve the Police immediately.) All discussions should be recorded in writing, and any communication with both the individual and the parents of the child(ren) agreed. The designated officer should be informed within one working day of all allegations that come to the School's attention and appear to meet the criteria or that are made directly to the Police and/or children's social care.

3. The case manager/DSL will ensure that the individual who is subject of the allegation is informed as soon as possible and given an explanation of the likely course or action, unless there is an objection by children's social care or the Police64. The case manager will appoint a named representative to keep the individual informed of the progress of the case and will consider what other support is appropriate for the individual.

4. The case manager/DSL should give careful consideration as to whether the circumstances of the case warrant suspension or whether alternative arrangements should be put in place until the allegation is resolved. The case manager will give due weight to the views of the designated officer, WT and KCSIE when making a decision about suspension. Where the individual is suspended, the case manager will ensure they know who their point of contact is in the School and shall provide them with their contact details.

5. Where a member of residential staff (such as the residential maintenance and security manager) is suspended pending an investigation, the case manager/DSL will consider whether arrangements for alternative accommodation away from children should be made.

6. The case manager/DSL will ensure that parents are informed as soon as possible and kept informed about progress of the case, subject to any advice from children's social care or the Police.

7. The case manager/DSL will discuss with the Headteacher whether a referral to the Disclosure and Barring Service or Teaching Regulation Agency should be made where an allegation is substantiated and the person is dismissed or the School ceases to use their services, or the person resigns or otherwise ceases to provide their services. The School has a legal obligation to report promptly to the Disclosure and Barring Service any person (whether employed, contracted, a volunteer or a student) who has harmed, or poses a risk of harm, to a child, or if there is reason to believe the member of staff has committed one of a number of listed offences, and who has been removed from working (paid or unpaid) in regulated activity, or would have been removed had they not left. Further, or in the alternative, if an investigation leads to the dismissal or resignation prior to dismissal of a member of teaching staff specifically, the School must consider making a referral to the Teaching Regulation Agency and a prohibition order may be appropriate (because that teacher has displayed unacceptable professional conduct, conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute or a conviction at any time for a relevant offence).

8. In conclusion of the case, the case manager/DSL should review the circumstances of the case with the Headteacher to determine whether there are any improvements to be made to the School's safeguarding procedures or practices to help prevent similar events in the future.

43.5. The School will make every reasonable effort to maintain confidentiality and guard against unwanted publicity whilst an allegation is being investigated or considered. Allegations found to be malicious will be removed from the individual's personnel records. In all other circumstances a written record will be made of the decision and retained on the individual's

personnel file in accordance with KCSIE and a copy will only be provided to the individual concerned.

43.6. Schools have an obligation to preserve records which contain information about allegations of sexual abuse for the duration of the inquiry in accordance with the guidelines of the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA)). All other records should be retained until the accused has reached pension age, or for a period of 10 years from the date of the allegation, whichever is longer.

43.7. Allegations proven to be false, unsubstantiated, unfounded or malicious will not be included in employer references. If an allegation is shown to be deliberately invented or malicious, the Head will consider whether any disciplinary action is appropriate against a pupil who made it; or whether the Police should be asked to consider if action might be appropriate against the person responsible even if they are not a pupil.

43.8. In all cases where there are concerns or allegations of abuse, the School will make a serious incident report to the Charity Commission whenever the Commission's guidelines deem it appropriate to do so.

44. Arrangements for dealing with safeguarding concerns and allegations about organisations or individuals using the school premises

44.1. The School will follow their safeguarding policy and procedures, including informing the LADO.

44.2. When services or activities at the School are provided under the direct supervision or management of school staff, this Policy will apply in relation to any safeguarding concerns or allegations.

44.3. Where services or activities are not under the direct supervision or management of the School, the School will seek assurance that any individual or organisation has appropriate safeguarding and child protection policies and procedures in place.

44.4. The school will ensure that there are arrangements in place for the provider to liaise with the School on these matters where appropriate.

44.5. The School will expect, where appropriate, providers to fully comply with the DfE guidance 'After school clubs, Community Activities, and Tuition: Safeguarding Guidance for Providers' (September 2023) and will seek assurance in this regard.

44.6. The School has arrangements in place for the use of school premises for non-school activities including the availability of the DSL or DDSL and how they can be contacted.

45. Low-level Concerns

45.1. Staff should refer to the *Low-Level Concerns Policy* for additional guidance which helps identify any weakness in the school safeguarding system.

45.2. At Oakwood we recognise the possibility that adults working in the school may harm children, including governors, volunteers, supply teachers, contractors and agency staff. Any concerns about the conduct of other adults in the school should be taken to the Headteacher without delay; any concerns about the Headteacher should go to the Chair of Governors.

45.3. Concerns may be graded Low-level if the concern does not meet the criteria for an allegation; and the person* has acted in a way that is inconsistent with the staff code of conduct, including inappropriate conduct outside of work. Example behaviours include, but are not limited to:

- being over friendly with children;
- having favourites;
- taking photographs of children on their mobile phone;
- engaging with a child on a one-to-one basis in a secluded area or behind a closed door;
- or, using inappropriate sexualised, intimidating or offensive language.

(*A person could be anyone working in the school or a college that provides education for children under 18 years of age, including supply teachers, volunteers and contractors.)

45.4. If the concern has been raised via a third party, the Headteacher/DSL should collect as much evidence as possible by speaking:

- directly to the person who raised the concern, unless it has been raised anonymously;
- to the individual involved and any witnesses.

45.5. Reports about supply staff and contractors should be notified to their employers, so any potential patterns of inappropriate behaviour can be identified.

45.6. Low-level concerns should be recorded in writing, including:

- name of individual sharing their concerns (if so desired, the individual will remain anonymous as far as reasonably practicable)
- details of the concern
- context in which the concern arose
- action taken

46. Low Level Concerns about staff behaviour

46.1. Any concerns about the conduct of a member of staff, including supply teachers, trainee teachers and all contracted staff should be reported to the Headteacher/DSL in the first instance.

46.2. Concerns may come from various sources, for example, a suspicion; complaint; or disclosure made by a child, parent or other adult within or outside of the organisation; or as a result of vetting checks undertaken.

46.3. The Headteacher/DSL has to decide whether the concern is an allegation or low-level concern. The term 'low-level' concern does not mean that it is insignificant, it means that the behaviour towards a child does not meet the threshold for referral to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) (see below).

46.4. Staff should be encouraged and feel confident to self-refer, where, for example, they have found themselves in a situation which could be misinterpreted, might appear compromising to others, and/or on reflection they believe they have behaved in such a way that they consider falls below the expected professional standards.

46.5. Staff are encouraged to consent to be named when sharing low-level concerns, as this will help to create a culture of openness and transparency. If the staff member who raises a low-level concern does not wish to be named, the School will respect that person's wishes as far as possible. However, there may be circumstances where the staff member will need to be named (for example, where disclosure is required by a court or local authority, or under a

fair disciplinary process) and, for this reason, the School will not promise anonymity to members of staff who share low-level concerns

46.6. Records must be kept confidential, held securely and comply with the Data Protection Act 2018. Schools and colleges should decide how long they retain such information, but it is recommended that it is kept at least until the individual leaves their employment.

46.7. Records should be reviewed so that potential patterns of concerning, problematic or inappropriate behaviour can be identified.

46.8. If a concerning pattern of behaviour is identified and now meets the criteria for an allegation, then the matter should be referred to the LADO other relevant external agencies, and in accordance with the School's ''Procedure when a Member of Staff faces Allegations of Abuse."

46.9. The records' review might identify that there are wider cultural issues within the school or college that enabled the behaviour to occur. This might mean that policies or processes could be revised or extra training delivered to minimise the risk of it happening again.

47. Where concerns or allegations relate to a trainee teacher placed within a school or college, the expectations of schools and colleges set out above also apply. In addition, teacher training providers are expected to follow the same procedures as set out for supply agencies.

48. Allegations

48.1. The term 'allegation' means it is alleged that an adult who works with children has:

- behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child; and/or
- possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child; and/or
- behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to children; and/or
- behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with

48.2. It is important that low-level concerns are shared with the Headteacher or DSL as soon as reasonably possible and, in any event, within 24 hours of becoming aware of it (where the concern relates to a particular incident) – although it is never too late to share a low-level concern.

48.3. If the Headteacher or DSL are absent for any reason, low-level concerns should be shared with the Operation's Manager who will ensure they inform the Headteacher immediately on their return.

48.4. If any low-level concern relates to the behaviour of the Headteacher, it should be referred to the Chair of Governors.

48.5. If there is a conflict of interest in sharing a low-level concern with the Headteacher or DSL, the low-level concern should be shared with the Chair of Governors unless there is conflict of interest in doing so, in which case it should be reported directly to the LADO 'without delay'.

48.6. Before contacting the LADO, schools and colleges should conduct basic enquiries in line with local procedures to establish the facts to help them determine whether there is any foundation to the allegation, being careful not to jeopardise any future police investigation.

48.7. The LADO's role is not to investigate the allegation, but to ensure that an appropriate investigation is carried out, whether that is by the police, children's social care, the school or college, or a combination of these.

49. Staff Code of Conduct Policy

49.1. The School's *Staff Code of Conduct Policy* can be found in the school's staff google drive and is issued to every new member of staff as part of the induction process. Staff are required to sign receipt of this policy to confirm they have read and adhere to the policy. The aim of the policy is to provide clear guidance about behaviour and actions so as to not place pupils or staff at risk of harm or of allegations of harm to a pupil.

50. Safer Recruitment

50.1. The School is committed to safer recruitment processes. Members of the teaching and non-teaching staff at the School including part-time staff, temporary and supply staff, and visiting staff, such as musicians and sports coaches are subject to the necessary statutory child protection checks before starting work, for example, right to work checks, additional overseas checks (if necessary), verifying identity, taking up references, checking work history and confirming medical fitness for the role.

50.2. For most appointments, an enhanced DBS check with 'barred list' information will be appropriate. A DBS certificate will be obtained from the candidate before or as soon as practicable after appointment. Alternatively, if the applicant has subscribed to it and gives permission, the School may undertake an online update check through the DBS Update Service.

50.3. The Crime and Policing Act 2026 made changes to regulated activity, meaning that any person volunteering in a school or college in a role that involves teaching, training, instructing or supervising children frequently or on more than 3 days in a 30-day period or overnight is now in regulated activity.

50.4. Existing volunteers who newly fall into regulated activity from 1 September 2026 must be checked (enhanced DBS + barred list, or in defined circumstances a standalone barred-list check). The 3-day/30-day threshold counts cumulatively across settings — if a volunteer helps at more than one school or college, the schools should work together to decide who obtains the check.

50.5. Volunteers who are not in regulated activity should still have a written risk assessment on file, considering the nature of the role, what the school knows about the volunteer, and whether a lower level of check (an enhanced DBS without barred list, or a basic DBS) is appropriate.

50.6. Full details of the School's safer recruitment procedures for checking the suitability of staff, Governors and volunteers to work with children and young people is set out in the School's Recruitment Policies.

50.7. The School's protocols for ensuring that any visiting speakers, whether invited by staff or pupils themselves, are suitable and appropriately supervised is set out in the School's Visiting Speaker policy.

51. Whistleblowing Procedures

51.1. We recognise that children cannot be expected to raise concerns in an environment where staff fail to do so. We have a culture and safety and raising concerns at Oakwood School where we value staff and undertake reflective practice. Staff should refer to the 'Staff Code of Conduct Policy', and the school's Staff Policy Handbook, Appendix 14 'Whistleblowing Policy' for further guidance.

51.2. All staff should be aware of their duty to raise concerns, where they exist, about the management of child protection, which may include the attitude or actions of colleagues. If it becomes necessary to consult outside the school, they should speak in the first instance, to the LADO following the whistleblowing procedures.

51.3. Whistleblowing re the Headteacher should be made to the Chair of the Governing Body whose contact details are readily available and known to staff. (Please refer to Appendix 1)

51.4. If staff and volunteers have concerns about poor or unsafe practices and potential failures in the School's safeguarding regime, these should be raised in accordance with the School's whistleblowing procedures. As a school, we ensure there is provision for mediation and dispute resolution where necessary. Concerns regarding the behaviour of colleagues which are likely to put pupils at risk of abuse or other serious harm may be dealt with in accordance with the School's Managing Allegations of Abuse against staff procedure (see above). There will be no disciplinary action taken against a member of staff for making such a report provided that it is done in good faith. These procedures are reinforced to staff during induction and on a regular basis during Inset and staff meetings, ensuring staff are aware of concerns that are received and handled with transparency and accountability.

51.5. If staff and volunteers feel unable to raise an issue with the School or feels that their genuine concerns are not being addressed, they may use other whistleblowing channels, such as the NSPCC whistleblowing helpline (tel: 0800 0280285 or email: help@nspcc.org.uk).

52. Use of Mobile Devices and Cameras

52.1. Neither staff nor children may use their own mobile phones to take photographs within the School's EYFS setting: Nursery to Reception. Please see the School's Data Protection Policy for the School's policy on taking photographs of pupils outside of these year groups. All staff adhere to the *Mobile Devices (including Mobile Cameras) Policy for Staff, Governors, Volunteers and Visitors (including EYFS).*

52.2. Further information can be found within our *Mobile Devices (including Mobile Camera) Policy for Staff, Governors, Volunteers and Visitors*.

53. Health & Safety

54. Our Health & Safety policy, set out in a separate document, reflects the consideration we give to the protection of our children both physically within the school environment, and for example in relation to internet use, and when away from the school and when undertaking school trips and educational visits.

55. Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)

55.1. As we are not an Ofsted registered setting, we will inform ISI of any allegations of serious harm or abuse by any person living, working, or looking after children at the premises (whether the allegations relate to harm or abuse committed on the premises or elsewhere). We will also notify ISI of the action taken in respect of the allegations. These notifications must be made as soon as is reasonably practicable, but at the latest within 14 days of the allegations being made. A registered provider who, without reasonable excuse, fails to comply with this requirement, commits an offence.

56. Information Sharing

56.1. The data protection laws do not prevent the sharing of information for the purposes of keeping children safe. Fears about sharing information must not be allowed to stand in the way of the need to safeguard and promote the welfare and protect the safety of children.

56.2. When deciding what information to share we consider: the relevancy of the information, including to the current safeguarding risk; what is necessary for the receiving setting to know; and whether it is clearly presented and appropriately contextualised is genuinely new content.

57. Position of Trust

57.1. As a result of their knowledge, position and /or the authority invested in their role, all adults working with children and young people in educational settings are in positions of trust in relation to their young people in their care. A relationship between a member of staff and a pupil cannot be a relationship between equals. There is potential for exploitation and harm of vulnerable young people and all members of staff have a responsibility to ensure that an unequal balance of power is not used for personal advantage or gratification.

57.2. Wherever possible, staff should avoid behaviour which might be misinterpreted by others, and report and record any incident with this potential. Staff should refer to the school's Staff Handbook which also includes its Social Media Policy.

58. Records

58.1. All concerns, discussions and decisions (with reasons) made in accordance with this policy will be recorded using CPOMS. CPOMS allows all concerns to be shared instantly with the relevant people immediately and securely.

59. Monitoring and Evaluation

59.1. The School monitors and evaluates its safeguarding policy and procedures through the following activities:

- Governing body visits to the School;
- Senior leadership team discussion sessions with children and staff
- Pupil questionnaires
- Frequent scrutiny of attendance data
- Regular analysis of a range of risk assessments

- Regular analysis of appropriate provision for the fulfilment of other safeguarding responsibilities relevant to the School [e.g. sufficient account must be taken of the nature, age range and other significant features of the School, such as historical issues, in the provisions made for safeguarding].
- Frequent scrutiny of governing body meeting minutes
- Logs of bullying and/or racist behaviour incidents are reviewed regularly by the senior leadership team and the governing body
- Regular review of parental concerns and parental questionnaires
- Regular review of the use of pupil-specific leisure rooms and clubs at lunchtime and after school
- Regular review of training offered to staff, including e-safety training.

60. Operation Encompass

60.1. Since November 2025, Operation Encompass has been a statutory duty on police forces in England and Wales, not a voluntary scheme. Where police have reasonable grounds to believe a child may be a victim of domestic abuse, they must notify that child's education setting (and, where relevant, the local authority). This includes all children connected to a household where they have attended a domestic abuse incident; children who are physically present at the incident, children not physically present during the incident, and situations where a child might reside in another household temporarily or permanently.

60.2. The DSL acts as the 'Key Adult' for Operation Encompass notifications and uses a central/confidential safeguarding inbox. Notifications must never include sexual-offence details (Sexual Offences (Amendment) Act 1992). Referral thresholds for what gets escalated to a safeguarding referral are set locally, in agreement between the school, local force and social services.

Appendix 1: Key External Contact Details

Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)	**West Sussex:** Miriam Williams and Donna Tomlinson Victoria Williams Consultation Contact Number: 0330 222 6450 (Available 09.00 – 17.00) LADO Service Contact Number: (Available through the Integrated Front Door) 01403 229900 LADO Service email address: LADO@WestSussex.gov.uk **Emergency Team: 0330 222 6664**
Local Safeguarding Partnerships: - **Local Authority (LA)** - **Clinical Commission Group (CCG)** - **Police**	**Local Authority** [WSCC] website for child protection: [www.westsussex.gov.uk] Out of Hours Emergency Duty Team (Sussex) - [0330 222 7799] wsscp@westsussex.gov.uk www.hampshiresafeguardingchildrenboard.org.uk Out of Hours Emergency Duty Team (Hampshire)

	[0300 555 1373] **<u>Clinical Commission Group</u>** NHS - 01903 708400 **<u>Police</u>** Police Emergency - 999 Police Non-Emergency - 101 **<u>Operation Encompass Helpline</u>**: The helpline is available 8AM to 1PM, Monday to Friday on 0204 513 9990
Integrated Front Door **(Previously Integrated Front Door)**	Integrated Front Door referrals: 01403229900 Out of hours - 03302226664
Support and Advice about Extremism	Police Emergency - 999 / Non-Emergency - 101 Local police non-emergency number is 01243 475432. Local Authority Department for Education Department of Education dedicated helpline for staff and governors (020 7340 7264) counter-extremism@education.gsi.gov.uk
NSPCC Whistleblowing Advice Line	NSPCC Whistleblowing advice line Tel: 0800 0280285 Email: help@nspcc.org.uk ADDRESS: Weston House, 42 Curtain Road London EC2A 3NH
Disclosure and Barring Service	Disclosure and Barring Service PO Box 181, Darlington, DL1 9FA Tel: 01325 953795 Email: dbsdispatch@dbs.gsi.gov.uk
Teaching Regulation Agency	ADDRESS: 53-55 Butts Road, Earlsdon Park, Coventry, CV1 3BH TEL: 0207 593 5393 EMAIL: misconduct.teacher@education.gov.uk
OFSTED Safeguarding Children **(If ISI unavailable for EYFS pupils)**	TEL: 0300 123 4666 (Monday to Friday from 8am to 6pm) EMAIL: Whistleblowing@ofsted.gov.uk
Independent Schools Inspectorate	TEL: 0207 6000100 EMAIL: concerns@isi.net

Further advice on Child Protection	NSPCC: http://www.nspcc.org.uk/ Childline: http://www.childline.org.uk/pages/home.aspx CEOP Thinkuknow: https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/ Anti-Bullying Alliance: http://anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk/ Beat Bullying: http://www.beatbullying.org/

KEY SCHOOL CONTACT DETAILS

Governors	**Chair of Governors** Mr Richard Geffen TEL: 01243 575209 EMAIL: office@oakwoodschool.co.uk **Nominated Safeguarding Governor** Mrs Hannah Davies TEL: 01243 575209 EMAIL: office@oakwoodschool.co.uk **Chair of Education & Safeguarding Committee** Mrs Naomi Bartholemew TEL: 01243 575209 EMAIL: office@oakwoodschool.co.uk
Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL) and Designated Safeguarding Staff (DSS)	**DSL (including EYFS)** Mrs Chrissie Zoltowski - Senior Management Team TEL: 01243 575209 EMAIL: czoltowski@oakwoodschool.co.uk **DDSL:** Mrs Karen Harrison TEL: 01243 575209 EMAIL: kharrison@oakwoodschool.co.uk **DSS:** Mrs Clare Bradbury - Headteacher TEL: 01243 575209 EMAIL: cbradbury@oakwoodschool.co.uk Mr Felix Page - Head of Digital Strategy, SMT TEL: 01243 575209 EMAIL: fpage@oakwoodschool.co.uk Mrs Emma Tarry - Head of EYFS, SMT TEL: 01243 575209 EMAIL: etarry@oakwoodschool.co.uk Mrs Eleanor Bax - Head of Operations and Logistics, SLT TEL: 01243 575209 EMAIL: ebax@oakwoodschool.co.uk Mrs Amanda Bailey - Head of Pastoral Care & Wellbeing and Head of KS1, SLT TEL: 01243 575209 EMAIL: abailey@oakwoodschool.co.uk Miss Chloe Reed - Nursery Leader TEL: 01243 575209 EMAIL: creed@oakwoodschool.co.uk

	Mrs Carla Todd- SENDCo TEL: 01243 575209 EMAIL: ctodd@oakwoodschool.co.uk
Designated Teacher for Looked After Children	**DSL (including EYFS)** Mrs Chrissie Zoltowski TEL: 01243 575209 EMAIL: czoltowski@oakwoodschool.co.uk
Headteacher	Mrs Clare Bradbury TEL: 01243 575209 EMAIL: head@oakwoodschool.co.uk

Appendix 2: Recognising Abuse

We seek guidance and expert advice from professional organisations giving practical support on specific safeguarding issues as stated in KCSIE (2025).

Recognising signs of child abuse

Categories of Abuse:

- Physical Abuse
- Emotional Abuse (including Domestic Abuse and Verbal Abuse such as persistent criticism, belittling, or name-calling
- Sexual Abuse
- Neglect
- Child-to-parent abuse, children may also cause harm to other family members, often referred to as child to parent or caregiver abuse.

Signs of Abuse in Children:

The following non-specific signs may indicate something is wrong:

- Significant change in behaviour
- Extreme anger or sadness
- Aggressive and attention-seeking behaviour
- Suspicious bruises with unsatisfactory explanations
- Lack of self-esteem
- Self-injury
- Poor mental health
- Age inappropriate sexual behaviour
- Child Sexual Exploitation.

Risk Indicators

The factors described in this section are frequently found in cases of child abuse. Their presence is not proof that abuse has occurred, but:

- Must be regarded as indicators of the possibility of significant harm
- Justifies the need for careful assessment and discussion with DSL
- May require consultation with and / or referral to Children's Services

The absence of such indicators does not mean that abuse or neglect has not occurred.
In an abusive relationship the child may:

- Appear frightened of the parent/s
- Act in a way that is inappropriate to her/his age and development (though full account needs to be taken of different patterns of development and different ethnic groups)
- Harm can include ill treatment that is not physical as well as the impact of witnessing ill treatment of others. This can be particularly relevant, for example, in relation to the impact on children of all forms of domestic abuse.

The parent or carer may:

- Persistently avoid child health promotion services and treatment of the child's episodic illnesses
- Have unrealistic expectations of the child
- Frequently complain about/to the child and may fail to provide attention or praise (high criticism/low warmth environment)
- Be absent or misusing substances
- Persistently refuse to allow access on home visits
- Be involved in domestic abuse

Staff should be aware of the potential risk to children when individuals, previously known or suspected to have abused children, move into the household.

Extra- familial harms:
Staff should be aware of extra-familial harms; that children can be at risk of abuse or exploitation in situations outside their families. Extra-familial harms take a variety of different forms and children can be vulnerable to multiple harms including (but not limited to) sexual abuse (including harassment and exploitation), domestic abuse in their own intimate relationships (teenage relationship abuse), criminal exploitation, serious youth violence, county lines, and radicalisation.

Recognising Physical Abuse
The following are often regarded as indicators of concern:
- An explanation which is inconsistent with an injury
- Several different explanations provided for an injury
- Unexplained delay in seeking treatment
- The parents/carers are uninterested or undisturbed by an accident or injury
- Parents are absent without good reason when their child is presented for treatment
- Repeated presentation of minor injuries (which may represent a "cry for help" and if ignored could lead to a more serious injury)
- Family use of different doctors and A&E departments
- Reluctance to give information or mention previous injuries

Bruising
Children can have accidental bruising, but the following must be considered as non-accidental unless there is evidence or an adequate explanation provided:
- Any bruising to a pre-crawling or pre-walking baby
- Bruising in or around the mouth, particularly in small babies which may indicate force feeding
- Two simultaneous bruised eyes, without bruising to the forehead, (rarely accidental, though a single bruised eye can be accidental or abusive)
- Repeated or multiple bruising on the head or on sites unlikely to be injured accidentally
- Variation in colour possibly indicating injuries caused at different times
- The outline of an object used e.g. belt marks, hand prints or a hair brush
- Bruising or tears around, or behind, the earlobe/s indicating injury by pulling or twisting
- Bruising around the face
- Grasp marks on small children
- Bruising on the arms, buttocks and thighs may be an indicator of sexual abuse

Bite Marks
Bite marks can leave clear impressions of the teeth. Human bite marks are oval or crescent shaped. Those over 3 cm in diameter are more likely to have been caused by an adult or older child.

A medical opinion should be sought where there is any doubt over the origin of the bite.

Burns and Scalds
It can be difficult to distinguish between accidental and non-accidental burns and scalds, and will always require experienced medical opinion. Any burn with a clear outline may be suspicious e.g.:
- Circular burns from cigarettes (but may be friction burns if along the bony protuberance of the spine)
- Linear burns from hot metal rods or electrical fire elements
- Burns of uniform depth over a large area
- Scalds that have a line indicating immersion or poured liquid (a child getting into hot water is his/her own accord will struggle to get out and cause splash marks)

- Old scars indicating previous burns/scalds which did not have appropriate treatment or adequate explanation

Scalds to the buttocks of a small child, particularly in the absence of burns to the feet, are indicative of dipping into a hot liquid or bath.

Fractures
Fractures may cause pain, swelling and discolouration over a bone or joint.

Non-mobile children rarely sustain fractures.

There are grounds for concern if:
- The history provided is vague, non-existent or inconsistent with the fracture type
- There are associated old fractures
- Medical attention is sought after a period of delay when the fracture has caused symptoms such as swelling, pain or loss of movement
- There is an unexplained fracture in the first year of life

Scars
A large number of scars or scars of different sizes or ages, or on different parts of the body, may suggest abuse.

Recognising Emotional Abuse
Emotional abuse may be difficult to recognise, as the signs are usually behavioural rather than physical. The manifestations of emotional abuse might also indicate the presence of other kinds of abuse.

The indicators of emotional abuse are often also associated with other forms of abuse.

The following may be indicators of emotional abuse:
- Developmental delay
- Abnormal attachment between a child and parent/carer e.g. anxious, indiscriminate or not attachment
- Indiscriminate attachment or failure to attach
- Aggressive behaviour towards others
- Scapegoated within the family
- Frozen watchfulness, particularly in pre-school children
- Low self-esteem and lack of confidence
- Withdrawn or seen as a "loner" – difficulty relating to others

Recognising Domestic Abuse
Children can be traumatised by seeing and hearing violence and abuse. They may also be directly targeted by the abuser or take on a protective role and get caught in the middle. In the long term this can lead to mental health issues such as depression, self-harm and anxiety.

Children affected by domestic abuse reflect their distress in a variety of ways. They may change their usual behaviour and become withdrawn, tired, start to wet the bed and have behavioural difficulties. They may not want to leave their house or may become reluctant to return. Others will excel, using their time in your care as a way to escape from their home life. None of these signs are exclusive to domestic abuse so when you are considering changes in behaviours and concerns about a child, think about whether domestic abuse may be a factor.

To talk through any concerns, call the West Sussex Domestic Helpline (NDVH) on 0808 2000 247.

Recognising Signs of Sexual Abuse

Boys and girls of all ages may be sexually abused and are frequently scared to say anything due to guilt and/or fear. This is particularly difficult for a child to talk about and full account should be taken of the cultural sensitivities of any individual child/family.

Recognition can be difficult, unless the child discloses and is believed. There may be no physical signs and indications are likely to be emotional/behavioural. However, the sexual abuse of children by other children is a specific safeguarding issue in education and should be taken incredibly seriously. It will not be tolerated.

Some behavioural indicators associated with this form of abuse are:

- Inappropriate sexualised conduct
- Sexually explicit behaviour, play or conversation, inappropriate to the child's age
- Continual and inappropriate or excessive masturbation
- Self-harm (including eating disorder), self-mutilation and suicide attempts
- Involvement in prostitution or indiscriminate choice of sexual partners
- An anxious unwillingness to remove clothes e.g. for sports events (but this may be related to cultural norms or physical difficulties)
- Sexual abuse can also take place on-line and technology can be used to facilitate off-line abuse.

Some physical indicators associated with this form of abuse are:

- Pain or itching of genital area
- Blood on underclothes
- Pregnancy in a younger girl where the identity of the father is not disclosed
- Physical symptoms such as injuries to the genital or anal area, bruising to buttocks, abdomen and thighs, sexually transmitted disease, presence of semen on vagina, anus, external genitalia or clothing

Sexual Abuse by Young People

The boundary between what is abusive and what is part of normal childhood or youthful experimentation can be blurred. The determination of whether behaviour is developmental, inappropriate or abusive will hinge around the related concepts of true consent, power imbalance and exploitation. This may include children and young people who exhibit a range of sexually problematic behaviour such as indecent exposure, obscene telephone calls, fetishism, bestiality and sexual abuse against adults, peers or children. This will not be tolerated and they are not an inevitable part of growing up.

Developmental Sexual Activity encompasses those actions that are to be expected from children and young people as they move from infancy through to an adult understanding of their physical, emotional and behavioural relationships with each other. Such sexual activity is essentially information gathering and experience testing. It is characterised by mutuality and of the seeking of consent.

Inappropriate Sexual Behaviour can be inappropriate socially, inappropriate to development, or both. In considering whether behaviour fits into this category, it is important to consider what negative effects it has on any of the parties involved and what concerns it raises about a child or young person. It should be recognised that some actions may be motivated by information seeking, but still cause significant upset, confusion, worry, physical damage, etc. it may also be that the behaviour is "acting out" which may derive from other sexual situations to which the child or young person has been exposed.

If an act appears to have been inappropriate, there may still be a need for some form of behaviour management or intervention. For some children, educational inputs may be enough to address the behaviour.

Abusive sexual activity included any behaviour involving coercion, threats, aggression together with secrecy, or where one participant relies on an unequal power base.

Assessment

In order to more fully determine the nature of the incident the following factors should be given consideration. The presence of exploitation in terms of:

- **Equality** – consider differentials of physical, cognitive and emotional development, power and control and authority, passive and assertive tendencies
- **Consent** – agreement including all the following:
    - Understanding that is proposed based on age, maturity, development level, functioning and experience
    - Knowledge of society's standards for what is being proposed
    - Awareness of potential consequences and alternatives
    - Assumption that agreements or disagreements will be respected equally
    - Voluntary decision
    - Mental competence
- **Coercion –** the young perpetrator who abuses may use techniques like bribing, manipulation and emotional threats of secondary gains and losses that is loss of love, friendship, etc. Some may use physical force, brutality or the threat of these regardless of victim resistance.

In evaluating sexual behaviour of children and young people, the above information should be used only as a guide. Further information and advice is available in the West Sussex multi-agency protocol "Working with Sexually Active Young People" available at www.wscc.gov.uk/safeguarding, by choosing Safeguarding Children – Protocols and Guidance for Professionals. Assessment, Consultation and Therapy (ACT) 01306 745310 can also assist professionals in identifying sexual behaviour of concern in children and adolescents.

Recognising Neglect

Evidence of neglect is built up over a period of time and can cover different aspects of parenting. Indicators include:

- Failure by parents or carers to meet the basic essential needs e.g. adequate food, clothes, warmth, hygiene and medical care
- A child seen to be listless, apathetic and unresponsive with no apparent medical cause. Failure of child to grow within normal expected pattern, with accompanying weight loss
- Child thrives away from home environment
- Child frequently absent from school
- Child left with adults who are intoxicated or violent
- Child abandoned or left alone for excessive periods

Child Sexual Exploitation

The following list of indicators is not exhaustive or definitive but it does highlight common signs which can assist professionals in identifying children or young people who may be victims of sexual exploitation. Signs include:

- underage sexual activity
- inappropriate sexual or sexualised behaviour
- sexually risky behaviour, 'swapping' sex
- repeat sexually transmitted infections
- in girls, repeat pregnancy, abortions, miscarriage

- receiving unexplained gifts or gifts from unknown sources
- having multiple mobile phones and worrying about losing contact via mobile
- having unaffordable new things (clothes, mobile) or expensive habits (alcohol, drugs)
- changes in the way they dress
- going to hotels or other unusual locations to meet friends
- seen at known places of concern
- moving around the country, appearing in new towns or cities, not knowing where they are
- getting in/out of different cars driven by unknown adults
- having older boyfriends or girlfriends
- contact with known perpetrators
- involved in abusive relationships, intimidated and fearful of certain people or situations
- hanging out with groups (gangs) of older people, or anti-social groups, or with other vulnerable peers
- associating with other young people involved in sexual exploitation
- recruiting other young people to exploitative situations
- truancy, exclusion, disengagement with school, opting out of education altogether
- unexplained changes in behaviour or personality (chaotic, aggressive, sexual)
- mood swings, volatile behaviour, emotional distress
- self-harming, suicidal thoughts, suicide attempts, overdosing, eating disorders
- drug or alcohol misuse
- getting involved in crime
- police involvement, police records
- involved in gangs, gang fights, gang membership
- injuries from physical assault, physical restraint, sexual assault.

Appendix 3: Honour Based Violence

Forced Marriage (FM)
This is an entirely separate issue from arranged marriage. It is a human rights abuse and falls within the Crown Prosecution Service definition of domestic violence. Young men and women can be at risk in affected ethnic groups. Whistle-blowing may come from younger siblings. Other indicators may be detected by changes in adolescent behaviours. Never attempt to intervene directly as a school or through a third party. Always call either the Contact Centre or the Forced Marriage Unit 020 7008 0151.

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)
It is essential that staff are aware of FGM practices and the need to look for signs, symptoms and other indicators of FGM.

What is FGM?
It involves procedures that intentionally alter or injure female genital organs for non-medical reasons.

4 types of procedure:
- Type 1 Clitoridectomy – partial/total removal of clitoris
- Type 2 Excision – partial/total removal of clitoris and labia minora
- Type 3 Infibulation entrance to vagina is narrowed by repositioning the inner/outer labia
- Type 4 all other procedures that may include: pricking, piercing, incising, cauterising and scraping the genital area.

Why is it carried out?
There is a belief that:
- FGM brings status/respect to the girl – social acceptance for marriage
- Preserves a girl's virginity
- Part of being a woman / rite of passage
- Upholds family honour
- Cleanses and purifies the girl
- Gives a sense of belonging to the community
- Fulfils a religious requirement
- Perpetuates a custom/tradition
- Helps girls be clean / hygienic
- Is cosmetically desirable
- Mistakenly believed to make childbirth easier

Is FGM legal?
FGM is internationally recognised as a violation of human rights of girls and women. It is **illegal** in most countries including the UK. As with Forced Marriage there is the **'One Chance' rule**. It is a legal duty that settings /schools/colleges take action **without delay** and call the Contact centre where there is a disclosure of FGM. 'It is recommended that you make a report orally by calling 101, the single non-emergency number.'

'Where there is a risk to life or likelihood of serious immediate harm, professionals should report the case immediately to police, including dialling 999 if appropriate'.

Circumstances and occurrences that may point to FGM happening are:

- Child talking about getting ready for a special ceremony
- Family taking a long trip abroad
- Child's family being from one of the 'at risk' communities for FGM (Kenya, Somalia, Sudan, Sierra Leon, Egypt, Nigeria, Eritrea as well as non-African communities including Yemeni, Afghani, Kurdistan, Indonesia and Pakistan)
- Knowledge that the child's sibling has undergone FGM
- Child talks about going abroad to be 'cut' or to prepare for marriage

Signs that may indicate a child has undergone FGM:

- Prolonged absence from school and other activities
- Behaviour change on return from a holiday abroad, such as being withdrawn and appearing subdued
- Bladder or menstrual problems
- Finding it difficult to sit still and looking uncomfortable
- Complaining about pain between the legs
- Mentioning something somebody did to them that they are not allowed to talk about
- Secretive behaviour, including isolating themselves from the group
- Reluctance to take part in physical activity
- Repeated urinary tract infection
- Disclosure

Appendix 4: Indicators of Vulnerability to Radicalisation

1. Radicalisation refers to the process by which a person comes to support terrorism and forms of extremism leading to terrorism.

2. Extremism is defined by the Government in the Prevent Strategy as:
'Vocal or active opposition to fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs. We also include in our definition of extremism calls for the death of members of our armed forces, whether in this country or overseas'.

3. Extremism is defined by the Crown Prosecution Service as:
'The demonstration of unacceptable behaviour by using any means or medium to express views which:
   - Encourage, justify or glorify terrorist violence in furtherance of particular beliefs;
   - Seek to provoke others to terrorist acts;
   - Encourage other serious criminal activity or seek to provoke others to serious criminal acts; or
   - Foster hatred which might lead to inter-community violence in the UK'.

4. There is no such thing as a "typical extremist": those who become involved in extremist actions come from a range of backgrounds and experiences, and most individuals, even those who hold radical views, do not become involved in violent extremist activity.

5. Pupils may become susceptible to radicalisation through a range of social, personal and environmental factors - it is known that violent extremists exploit vulnerabilities in individuals to drive a wedge between them and their families and communities. It is vital that school staff are able to recognise those vulnerabilities.

6. Indicators of vulnerability include:
   - Identity Crisis – the student / pupil is distanced from their cultural / religious heritage and experiences discomfort about their place in society;
   - Personal Crisis – the student / pupil may be experiencing family tensions; a sense of isolation; and low self-esteem; they may have dissociated from their existing friendship group and become involved with a new and different group of friends; they may be searching for answers to questions about identity, faith and belonging;
     Personal Circumstances – migration; local community tensions; and events affecting the student / pupil's country or region of origin may contribute to a sense of grievance that is triggered by personal experience of racism or discrimination or aspects of Government policy;
   - Unmet Aspirations – the student / pupil may have perceptions of injustice; a feeling of failure; rejection of civic life;
   - Experiences of Criminality – which may include involvement with criminal groups, imprisonment, and poor resettlement / reintegration;
   - Special Educational Need – students / pupils may experience difficulties with social interaction, empathy with others, understanding the consequences of their actions and awareness of the motivations of others.

7. However, this list is not exhaustive, nor does it mean that all young people experiencing the above are at risk of radicalisation for the purposes of violent extremism.

8. More critical risk factors could include:
   - Being in contact with extremist recruiters;
   - Accessing violent extremist websites, especially those with a social networking element;
   - Possessing or accessing violent extremist literature;
   - Using extremist narratives and a global ideology to explain personal disadvantage;
   - Justifying the use of violence to solve societal issues;
   - Joining or seeking to join extremist organisations; and
   - Significant changes to appearance and / or behaviour;
   - Experiencing a high level of social isolation resulting in issues of identity crisis and / or personal crisis.

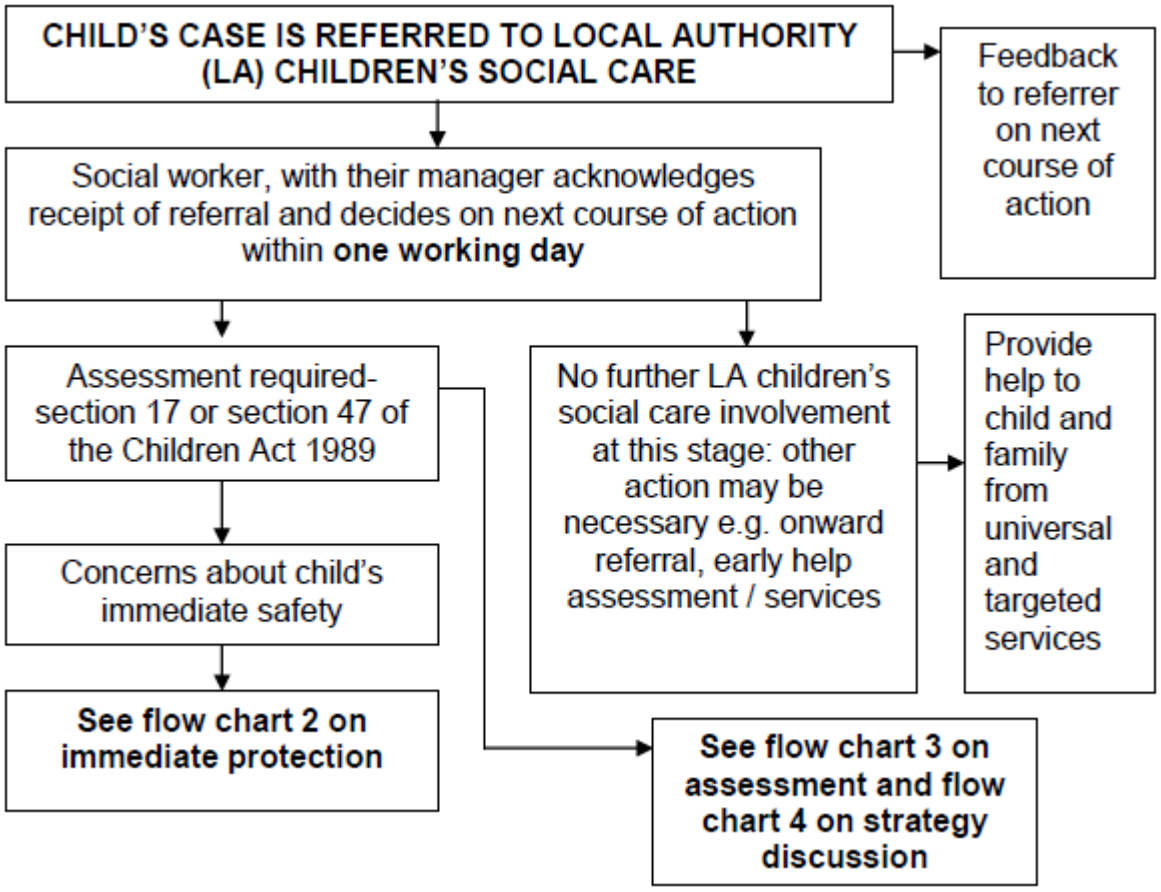
The Department of Education guidance The Prevent Duty can be accessed via this link.

Appendix 5: West Sussex Safeguarding Children Board's Procedures

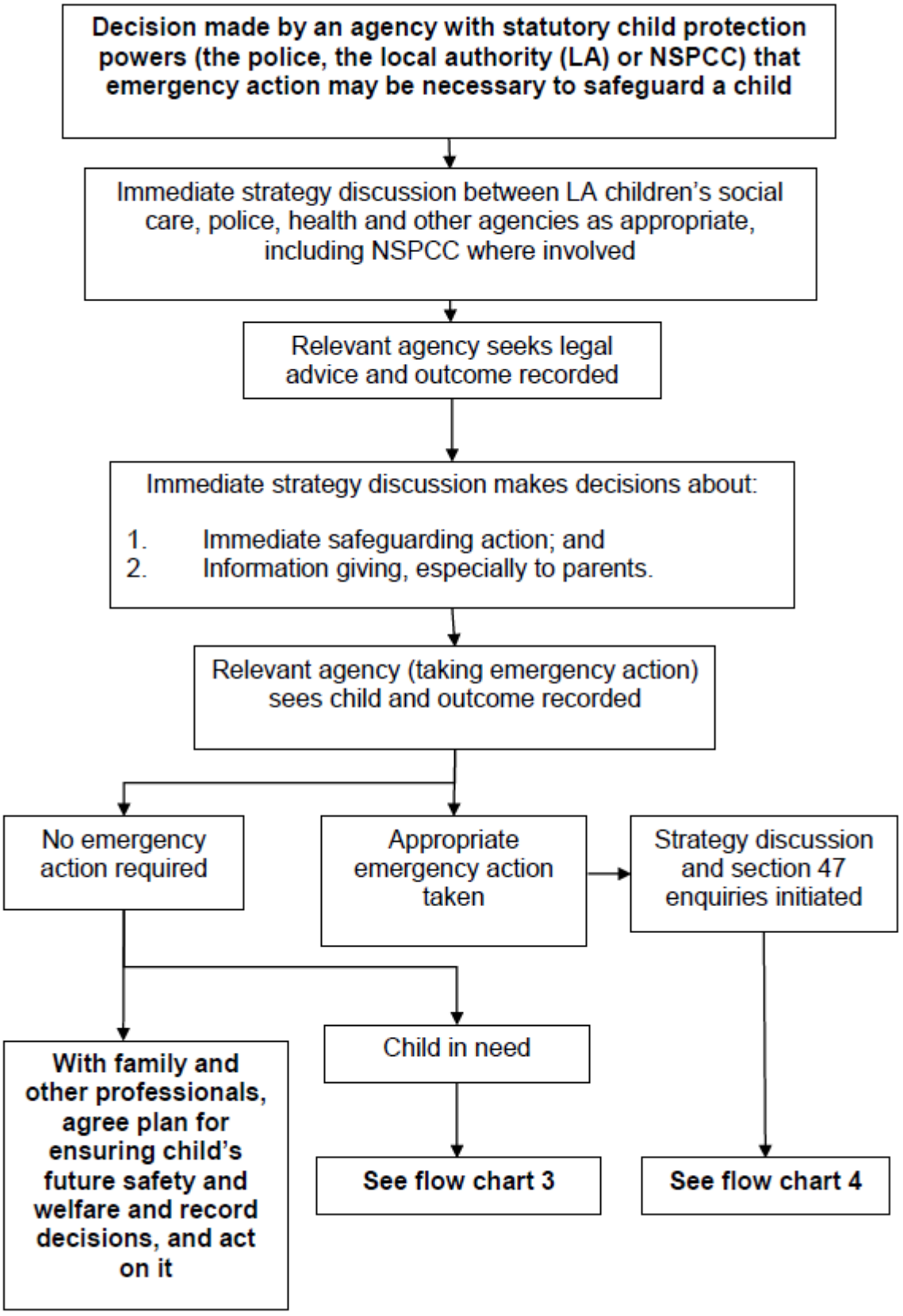
Flowchart 1: Action taken when a child is referred to local authority children's social care services

A screening process is undertaken by Integrated Front Door/Front Door for Families/SPOA taking into consideration local Thresholds.

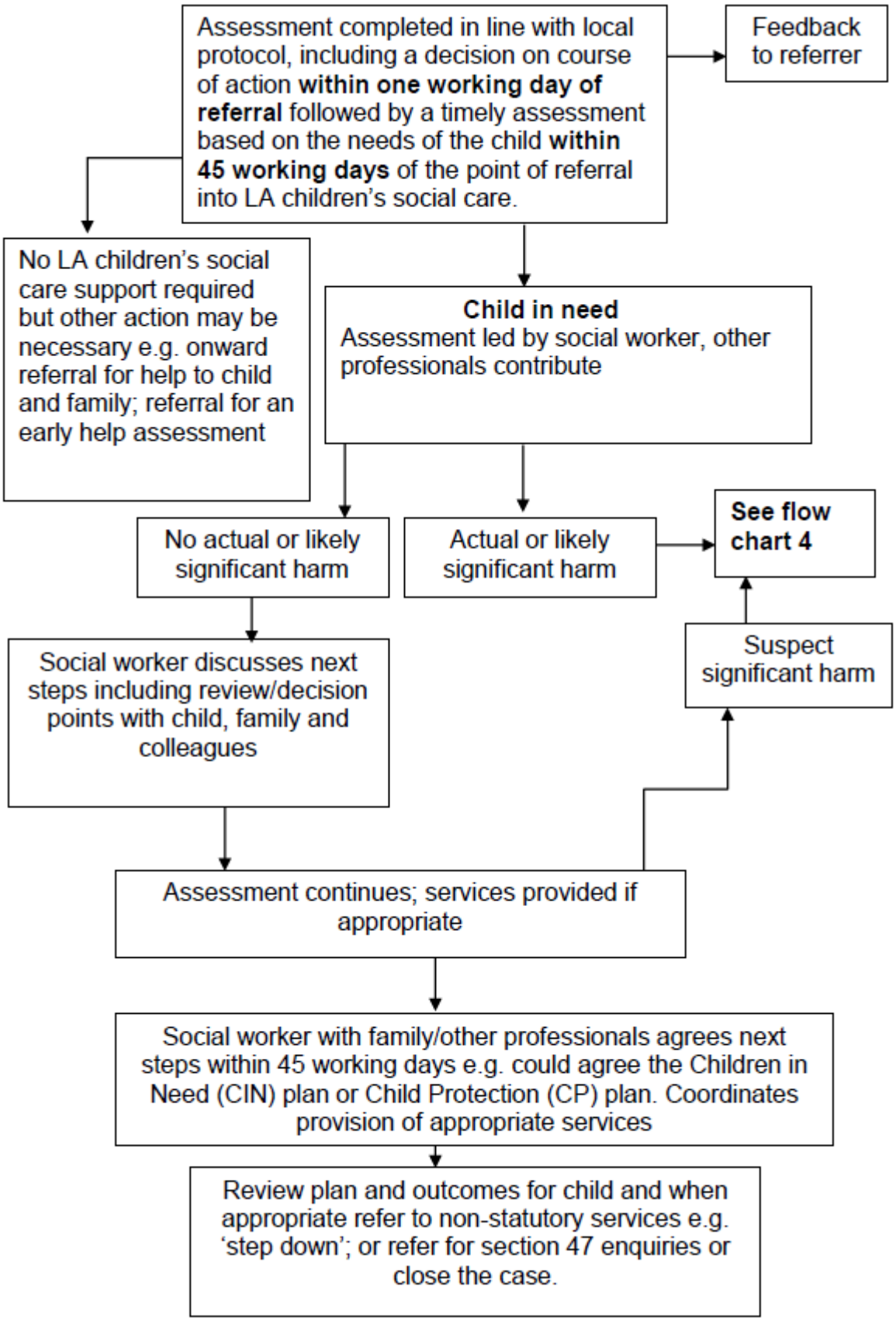
After this the following takes place:



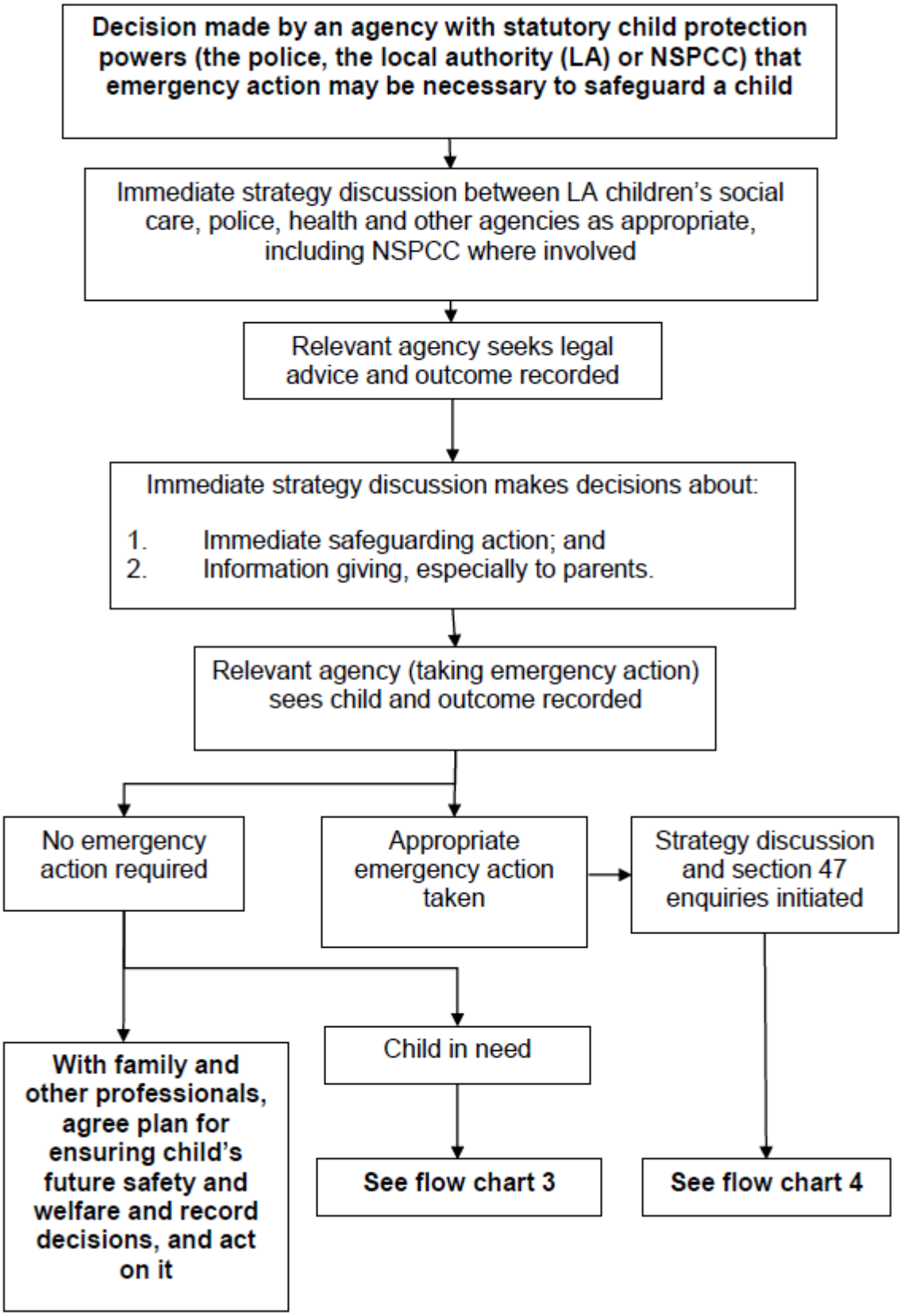
Flowchart 2: Immediate protection



Flowchart 3: Action taken for an assessment of a child under the Children Act 1989



Flowchart 4: Immediate protection



Appendix 6: Hampshire County Council Children's Partnership

1.1 Referrals
See also Good Practice supporting the Voice of the Child Procedure.

For more information on responding to children disclosing abuse, see the NSPCC resources.

Contents

- Introduction
- Organisational responsibilities
- (Jump to)
- Making a referral
- Response to a referral

Introduction

When a professional working in Hampshire, Isle of Wight, Portsmouth or Southampton assesses that a child/family requires additional support, they need to complete an inter-agency referral or contact form as per local processes and share this with the relevant Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub. The use of the Threshold Guidance will assist this process and help inform the practitioner's decision-making.
Anyone who has concerns about a child's welfare should make a referral to local authority children's social care and should do so immediately if there is a concern that the child is suffering significant harm or is likely to do so. Practitioners who make a referral should always follow up their concerns if they are not satisfied with the response.

Organisational responsibilities

Section 11 of the Children Act 2004 Places duties on a range of organisations, agencies and individuals to ensure their functions, and any services that they contract out to others, are discharged having regard to the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

Anyone who has concerns about a child's welfare should make a referral to local authority children's social care. For example, referrals may come from: children themselves, teachers, a GP, the police, health visitors, family members and members of the public. Within local authorities, children's social care should act as the principal point of contact for welfare concerns relating to children.

When professionals refer a child, they should include any information they have on the child's developmental needs and the capacity of the child's parents or carers to meet those needs. This information may be included in any assessment, including the early help assessment, which may have been carried out prior to a referral into local authority children's social care. Where an early help assessment has already been undertaken it should be used to support a referral to local authority children's social care, however, this is not a prerequisite for making a referral.

The speed with which an assessment is carried out after a child's case has been referred into local authority children's social care should be determined by the needs of the individual child and the nature and level of any risk of harm they face. This will require judgments to be made by the social worker on each individual case.

Within one working day of a referral being received, a local authority social worker should acknowledge receipt to the referrer and make a decision about next steps and the type of response required.

Making a referral

New referrals on open cases should be made directly to the allocated worker for the child / family (or in their absence their manager or the duty social worker). For new referrals on closed or unknown children where the child/children have NOT suffered significant harm or are NOT in immediate danger, the referral should be submitted to the Children's Reception Team (CRT) online using the Inter Agency Referral Form (IARF). Should it become apparent that a case is already open to the department, this information will be transferred directly to the responsible worker.

If a professionals believe a child has suffered, or is likely to suffer, significant harm, they should contact CRT directly using the professional's telephone number. Any telephone contact with CRT will need to be supplemented with a further Inter Agency Referral Form (IARF). Professionals can refer child protection concerns directly using the IARF.

The referrer should provide information, using the relevant local form, about their concerns and any information they may have gathered in an assessment that may have taken place prior to making the referral. The referrer will be asked to provide the following information:

- Details about the individual making the referral
- Details of the children, parents and or other significant adults
- The reason / nature of the concerns raised
- Any identified risk factors
- Any risk assessment tools that have been used
- The family background
- Outcome the referrer is seeking

There should not be a delay in order to collect information if the delay may place the child at risk of significant harm.
All referrals from professionals should be confirmed in writing, by the referrer, within 48 hours. If the referrer has not received an acknowledgement within three working days, they should contact children's social care again.

Response to a referral

When a parent, professional, or another person contacts local authority children's social care with concerns about a child's welfare, it is the responsibility of local authority children's social care to clarify with the referrer (including self-referrals from children and families):

- the nature of concerns;
- how and why they have arisen;
- what appear to be the needs of the child and family; and
- what involvement they are having or have had with the child and/or family members.

Within **one working day of a referral being received**, a local authority social worker should acknowledge receipt to the referrer and make a decision about next steps and the type of response required. This will include determining whether:

- the child requires immediate protection and urgent action is required • the child is in need and should be assessed under section 17 of the Children Act 1989

- there is reasonable cause to suspect that the child is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm, and whether enquires must be made and the child assessed under section 47 of the Children Act 1989
- any services are required by the child and family and what type of services
- further specialist assessments are required to help the local authority to decide what further action to take
- to see the child as soon as possible if the decision is taken that the referral requires further assessment

The child and family must be informed of the action to be taken, unless a decision is taken on the basis that this may jeopardise a police investigation or place the child at risk of significant harm.

For children who are in need of immediate protection, action must be taken by the social worker, or the police or the NSPCC if removal is required, as soon as possible after the referral has been made to local authority children's social care.

The maximum timeframe for the assessment to conclude, such that it is possible to reach a decision on next steps, should be no longer than 45 working days from the point of referral. If, in discussion with a child and their family and other practitioners, an assessment exceeds 45 working days, the social worker should record the reasons for exceeding the time limit.

Feedback should be given by local authority children's social care to the referrer on the decisions taken. Where appropriate, this feedback should include the reasons why a case may not meet the statutory threshold to be considered by local authority children's social care for assessment and suggestions for other sources of more suitable support.

Where the outcome of the referral leads to a continuing assessment, see Assessment Procedure.

1.2 Assessment Procedure

Contents

- Principles of a good assessment (Jump to)
- Focusing on the needs and views of the child (Jump to)
- Developing a clear analysis (Jump to)
- Immediate protection (Jump to)
- Focusing on outcomes (Jump to)

Principles of a good assessment

Assessment should be a dynamic process, which analyses and responds to the changing nature and level of need and/or risk faced by the child from within and outside their family. It is important that the impact of what is happening to a child is clearly identified and that information is gathered, recorded and checked systematically, and discussed with the child and their parents/carers where appropriate.

Any provision identified as being necessary through the assessment process should, if the local authority decides to provide such services, be provided without delay. A good assessment will monitor and record the impact of any services delivered to the child and family and review the help being delivered. Whilst services may be delivered to a parent or carer, the assessment should be focused on the needs of the child and on the impact any services are having on the child.

Good assessments support practitioners to understand whether a child has needs relating to their care or a disability and/or is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm.

The local authority should act decisively to protect the child from abuse and neglect including initiating care proceedings where existing interventions are insufficient. Where an assessment in these circumstances identifies concerns but care proceedings are not initiated, the assessment should provide a valuable platform for ongoing engagement with the child and their family.

High quality assessments:

- are child-centred. Where there is a conflict of interest, decisions should be made in the child's best interests: be rooted in child development: be age-appropriate; and be informed by evidence
- are focused on action and outcomes for children
- are holistic in approach, addressing the child's needs within their family and any risks the child faces from within the wider community
- ensure equality of opportunity
- involve children, ensuring that their voice is heard and provide appropriate support to enable this where the child has specific communication needs
- involve families
- identify risks to the safety and welfare of children
- build on strengths as well as identifying difficulties
- are integrated in approach
- are multi-agency and multi-disciplinary
- are a continuing process, not an event
- lead to action, including the provision of services
- review services provided on an ongoing basis
- are transparent and open to challenge.

Focusing on the needs and views of the child

Every assessment should reflect the unique characteristics of the child within their family and community context. Each child whose referral has been accepted by children's social care should have their individual needs assessed, including an analysis of the parental capacity to meet those needs whether they arise from issues within the family or the wider community. Frequently, more than one child from the same family is referred and siblings within the family should always be considered. Family assessments that include all members of the family should always ensure that the needs of individual children are distinct considerations.

Every assessment, including young carer, parent carer and non-parent carer assessments, should draw together relevant information gathered from the child and their family and from relevant practitioners including teachers and school staff, early years workers, health practitioners, the police and adult social care. Where a child has been looked after and has returned home, information from previous assessments and case records should also be reviewed.

See the Assessment Framework in Working Together 2018.

Developing a clear analysis

The social worker should analyse all the information gathered from the assessment, including from a young carer's, parent carer's or non-parent carer's assessment, to decide the nature and level of the child's needs and the level of risk, if any, they may be facing. The social worker should receive insight and challenge to their emerging hypothesis from their practice supervisors and other relevant practitioners who should challenge the social worker's assumptions as part of this process.

An informed decision should be taken on the nature of any action required and which services should be provided. Social workers, their managers and other practitioners should be mindful of the requirement to understand the level of need and risk in, or faced by, a family from the child's perspective and plan accordingly, understanding both protective and risk factors the child is facing. The analysis should inform the action to be taken which will have maximum impact on the child's welfare and outcomes.

Assessment is a dynamic and continuous process that should build upon the history of every individual case, responding to the impact of any previous services and analysing what further action might be needed. Social workers should build on this with help from other practitioners from the moment that a need is identified. A high quality assessment is one in which evidence is built and revised throughout the process and takes account of family history and the child's experience of cumulative abuse.

Immediate protection

Where there is a risk to the life of a child or a likelihood of serious immediate harm, local authority social workers, the police or NSPCC should use their statutory child protection powers to act immediately to secure the safety of the child.

If it is necessary to remove a child from their home, a local authority must, wherever possible and unless a child's safety is otherwise at immediate risk, apply for an Emergency Protection Order (EPO). Police powers to remove a child in an emergency should be used only in exceptional circumstances where there is insufficient time to seek an EPO or for reasons relating to the immediate safety of the child.

An EPO, made by the court, gives authority to remove a child and places them under the protection of the applicant.

When considering whether emergency action is necessary, an agency should always consider the needs of other children in the same household or in the household of an alleged perpetrator.

The local authority in whose area a child is found in circumstances that require emergency action (the first authority) is responsible for taking emergency action.

If the child is looked-after by, or the subject of a child protection plan in another authority, the first authority must consult the authority responsible for the child. Only when the second local authority explicitly accepts responsibility (to be followed up in writing) is the first authority relieved of its responsibility to take emergency action.

Multi-agency working

Planned emergency action will normally take place following an immediate strategy discussion. Social workers, the police or NSPCC should:

- initiate a strategy discussion to discuss planned emergency action. Where a single agency has to act immediately, a strategy discussion should take place as soon as possible after action has been taken
- see the child (this should be done by a practitioner from the agency taking the emergency action) to decide how best to protect them and whether to seek an EPO
- wherever possible, obtain legal advice before initiating legal action, in particular when an EPO is being sought.

Focusing on outcomes

Every assessment should be focused on outcomes, deciding which services and support to provide to deliver improved welfare for the child.

Where the outcome of the assessment is continued local authority children's social care involvement, the social worker should agree a plan of action with other practitioners and discuss this with the child and their family. The plan should set out what services are to be delivered, and what actions are to be undertaken, by whom and for what purpose.

Many services provided will be for parents or carers (and may include services identified in a parent carer's or non-parent carer's needs assessment). The plan should reflect this and set clear measurable outcomes for the child and expectations for the parents, with measurable, reviewable actions for them.

The plan should be reviewed regularly to analyse whether sufficient progress has been made to meet the child's needs and the level of risk faced by the child. This will be important for neglect cases where parents and carers can make small improvements. The test should be whether any improvements in adult behaviour are sufficient and sustained. Social workers should consider the need for further action and record their decisions. The review points should be agreed by the social worker with other practitioners and with the child and family to continue evaluating the impact of any change on the welfare of the child.

Known transition points for the child should be planned for in advance. This includes where children are likely to transition between child and adult services.